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American **Cinematographer**

**INDEPENDENT
FILM ISSUE**

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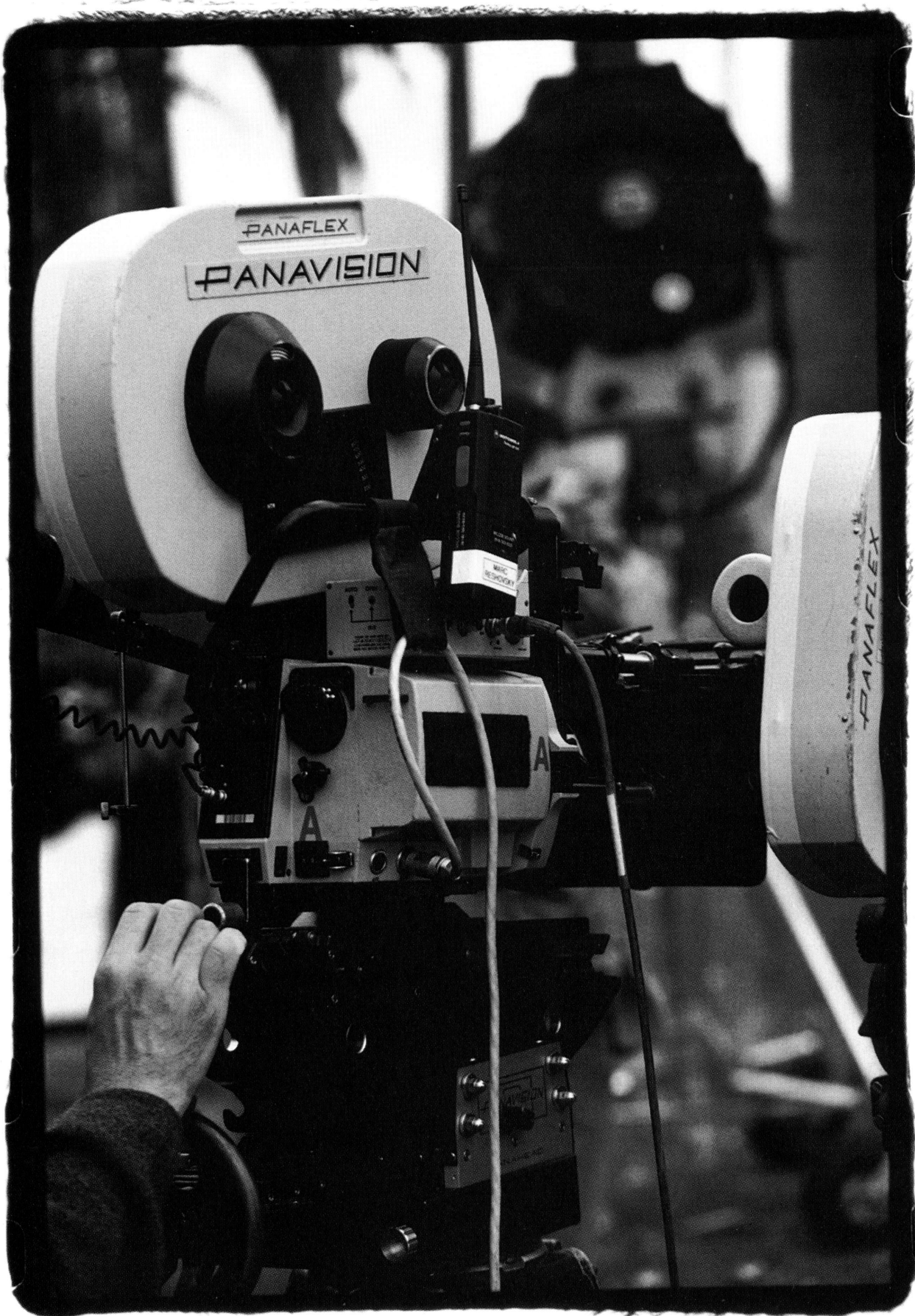
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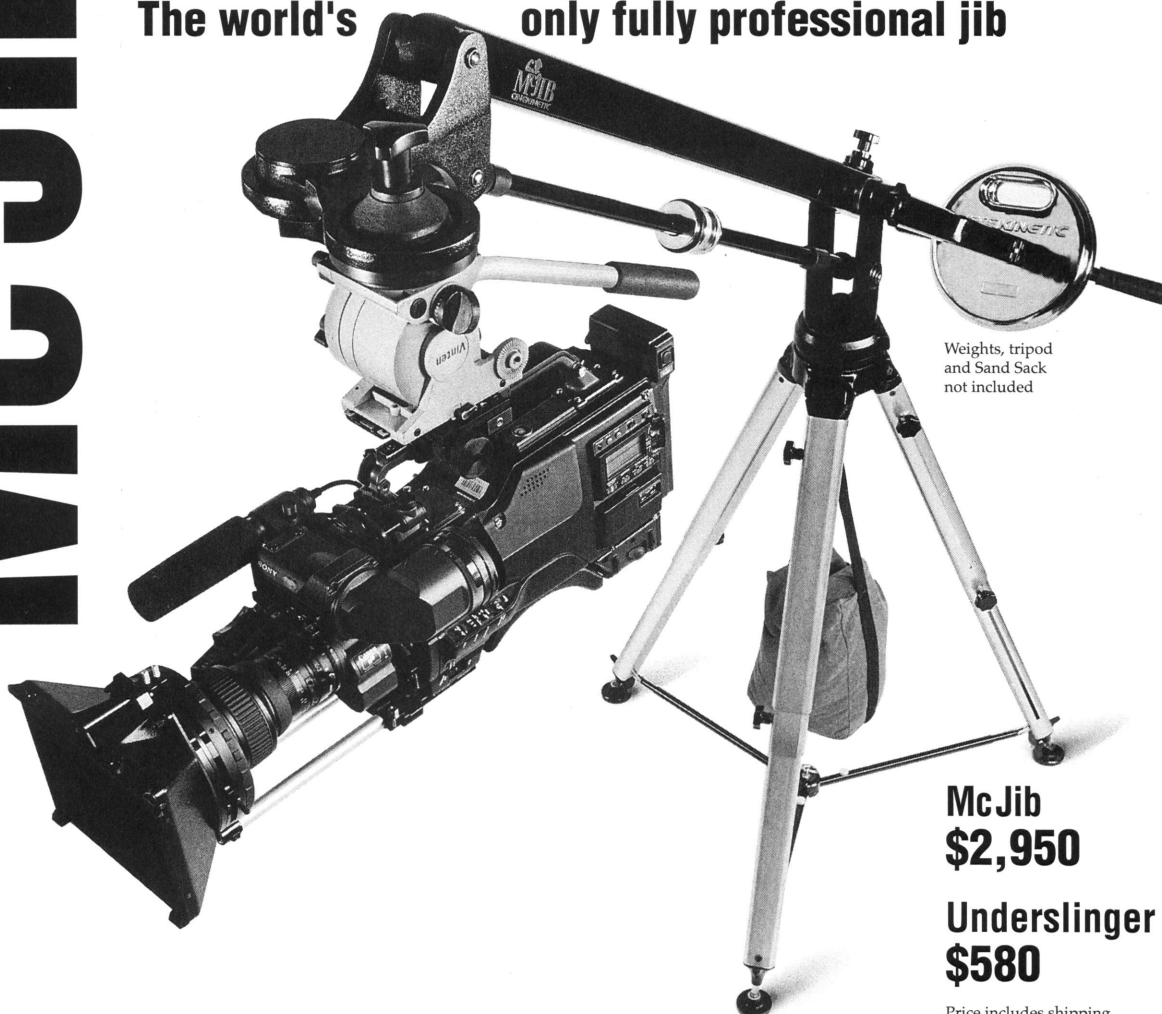


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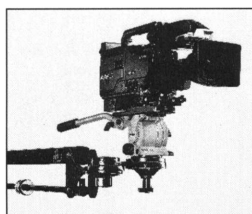
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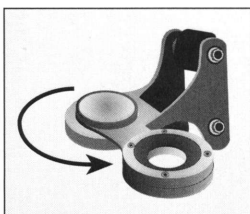
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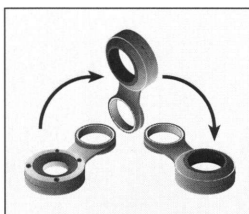
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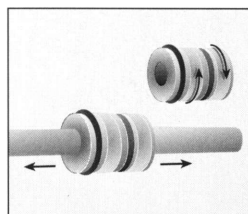
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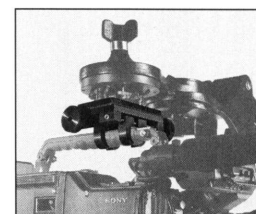
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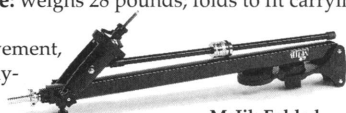


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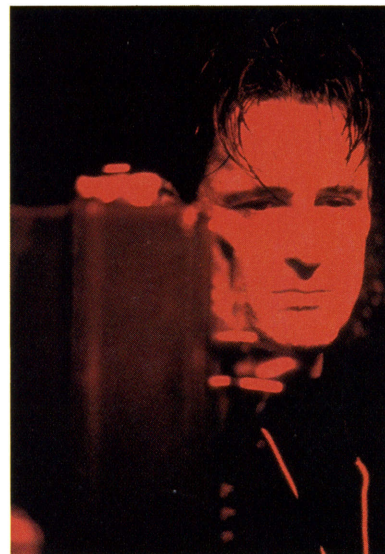
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On Our Cover:

Awash in the red glow of a jazz nightclub, saxophonist Fred Madison (Bill Pullman) phones home — but gets no answer — in *Lost Highway*, directed by David Lynch and photographed by Peter Deming (photo by Suzanne Tenner, courtesy of October Films).

Contributing

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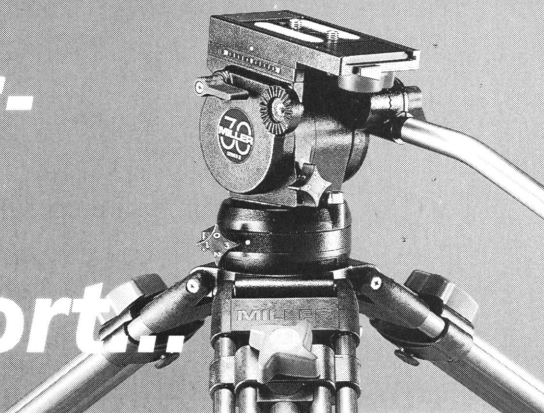
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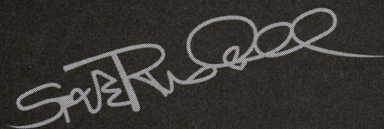
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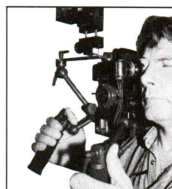
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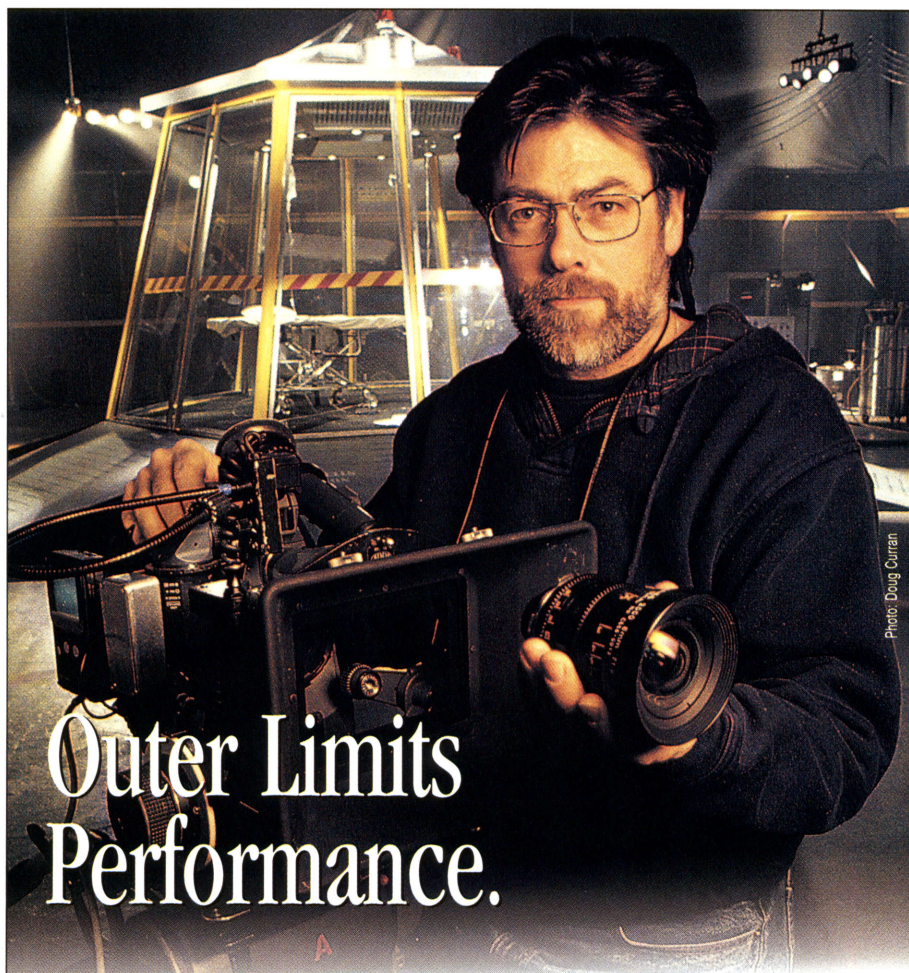


Photo: Doug Curran

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“The *Outer Limits* is a wide angle show. Among the many challenges associated with shooting super-16, the lack of a good quality wide angle lens that covers the entire negative area was one of my greatest concerns.

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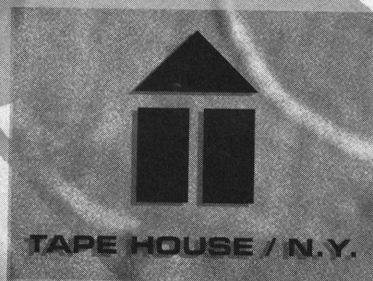
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What we've learned at Clairmont about the Zeiss Variable Primes:

After reading the script for *Free Willy 3*, I assumed I would have to compromise on lenses," says Director Of Photography Tobias Schliessler.

Zoom lens really needed for this job

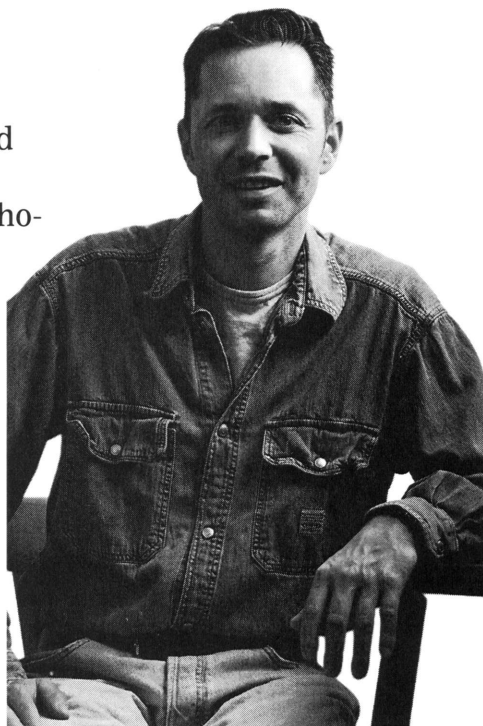
"I had always avoided zoom lenses, but on this job there seemed to be no alternative. Around two-thirds of the picture would be shot at sea, working from a moving barge. The actors would be on moving boats. Even with a manned crane (moving) and a Power Pod (also moving), trying to frame properly with fixed lenses would slow things down far too much."

Variable what?

"The new Variable Primes had just become available. I was skeptical, but I thought I should try them; so I called Clairmont. They lent me a set, together with a set of Superspeeds, so we could shoot A/B comparison tests at the location near Vancouver."

Probable flare problems

"For *Free Willy 3*, I was hoping to shoot a lot of the water footage backlit. Sun reflections off the waves, in frame. Even if the worst hotspots were just *out* of frame, it would be difficult to flag the lens for tracking and crane shots from the moving barge and hand-held on the moving boats. Some of those boats would be brushed aluminum—like big reflector boards with actors riding around on them."



D.P. Tobias Schliessler talks about using them:

Comparison test

"We made a series of tests: each scene shot with a fixed Superspeed and then immediately with a Variable Prime at the same focal length, from the same position. We did that with every focal length in the Superspeed set and with the equivalent settings on the Variables, at various T stops. Some of the scenes were the aluminum boats on backlit water, with the sun's reflections bouncing into the lenses. In some of those, we even had the sun in frame."

"When we projected the footage, everyone in the screening theater was amazed to see that the Variables were every bit as sharp as the Superspeeds (which are excellent lenses). We were even more amazed to see that the Variable Primes showed *even less flare* than the Superspeeds."

Flexible framing

"The tests convinced me; and we ended up shooting the whole picture with a set of Variables and a set of Superspeeds. (And a 14mm, which I hardly used.) Sometimes we had one VP lens on the A camera and one of the other two VPs on the B camera. We could fine-tune the framing on both cameras when we lined up the shot—and then we could *keep* it fine-tuned on both cameras by changing focal length slightly as things moved around during the shot."

Perfect matching

"Yes, we *could* have done that with two 5 to 1 zooms; but the VPs were faster, wider and had no flare problems. And their color, contrast and sharpness matched the Superspeeds, which we used for hand-held and 2nd Unit. About a sixth of the picture was shot hand-held; and we intercut that with the VP footage, so the perfect matching was very helpful."

How much did they cost?

"The VP lenses added about 25% to our lens bill. We rented one set of VPs and one set of Super-

speeds. If we hadn't had the VPs, we would have had to take two sets of Superspeeds *and* a 5 to 1, as insurance."

Focal length fit

"I've been used to thinking in specific focal lengths," says Mr. Schliessler, "So I sometimes picked out a Superspeed to line up a shot, after which we mounted a Variable to film it. And I noticed that the range of each VP seemed a good fit for the fixed lenses it replaced. I never felt the need for a few extra millimeters."

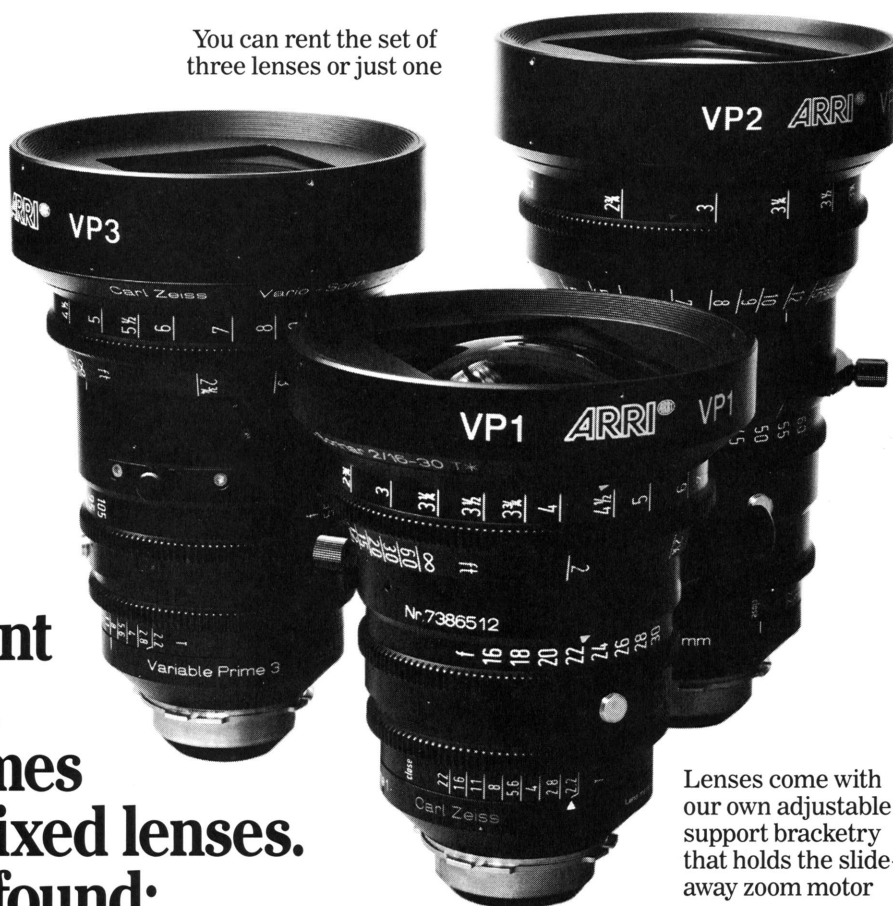
Denny Clairmont compared a set of Variable Primes with the Zeiss fixed lenses. Here's what he found:

"When the first Variable Primes arrived, ARRI sent me a set to look at," says Denny Clairmont. "I put them through our standard series of projection and MTF measurement tests."

"We have three of the MTF test machines that Zeiss built for ARRI. Every Zeiss lens we buy is tested on a machine like ours before it leaves the factory. It's then inspected at ARRI on an identical machine. When the lens gets to us, we check it out on one of our Zeiss machines."

"With the machine, we can confirm that each new lens meets the Zeiss factory-spec minimum MTF numbers. We also write down the actual numbers (at various T stops) for that individual new lens and we keep those numbers on file. Every time that lens comes back from a job, its numbers are read on the machine, to make sure it's as good as new."

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"Because they're zooms, I expected lower MTF numbers from the Variable Primes than from the Zeiss fixed focal lengths I compared them with. But I was wrong. Some were slightly lower, some were about the same, some were slightly *higher*! It was quite a surprise. After all, the Zeiss Standards and Superspeeds are superb lenses."

"I also put the Variable Primes on the test projector. (*We have three of those, too.*) There again, I could see that the Variables were as good as or better than the corresponding fixed lenses. Which ones? I compared the VP1 (for example) with the 16, 24 and 32mm Zeiss Standards and with the 18, 25 and 35mm Superspeeds."

"Three of the things zooms have a tougher time with are veiling glare, lateral chromatic aberration and curvilinear distortion.

For twenty years, my tests have shown top-quality fixed lenses doing better on those – fixed lenses in the prime focal lengths, that is. So that's what I expected this time. Wrong again."

"The projected images showed that veiling glare (flare) was even better controlled in the Variables than in the fixed lenses, *which are excellent*. Linear distortion was also better than in some of the fixed lenses. And lateral color was the biggest surprise. It shows up clearly in projection, as color fringes; and it's the big difficulty zoom lenses have. But here too, the Variables were as good as or better than the fixed lenses."

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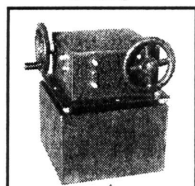
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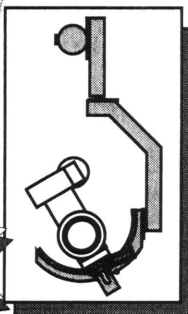
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Letters

To Err or Not to Err

The recent article about *Hamlet* (AC Jan. '96) is great (as usual), although the beginning of the article is badly researched when the writing pertains to the history of 65mm. *Baraka* was filmed in 65mm in 1992 with Todd-AO equipment; it is not a documentary, but a non-narrative dramatic film. *Brainstorm* and *Tron* were also filmed partly in 65mm (both in Super Panavision 70). Additionally, a large number of short films have been made in 65mm in the past 25 years, including the one-reelers *Symbiosis* and *Dead Sea*, both of which were filmed with Panavision 65mm equipment.

Mr. Fisher mentions a dozen film titles which have been made in 65mm, but *Doctor Zhivago* was filmed in 35mm anamorphic Panavision, and *How the West Was Won* was filmed in three-strip Cinerama. It is not true that 3-D movies, as stated in the article, were filmed in 65mm and released in 70mm.

My last remark is that it was Mike Todd, Jr. — and not Sr. — who made *Scent of Mystery*, and it was shot in Todd-70, not Todd-AO 65. Apparently, they used standard Mitchell BNC cameras; however, the lenses were probably non-Todd-AO, which should explain why the Todd-70 name was used to gain attention. If Mr. Fisher is interested, I can supply him with a very long list of 65mm productions from 1889 until the present.

— Thomas Hauerslev
Editor/Projectionist
70mm Film Association
Frederiksberg, Denmark

Format Flubs

In reference to the article on the Cinerama revival (AC Dec. '96, Prod. Slate, *How the Midwest Has Won Cinerama*), *Ice Station Zebra* was not shot in Ultra-Panavision 70, but nonanamorphic Super Panavision, as were *Grand Prix* and *2001: A Space Odyssey*. *Krakatoa*, *East of Java* was shot with both Super Panavision and Todd-

AO cameras, so no credit appears on the film.

For the record, Ultra Panavision was adopted as the basis of the single-lens Cinerama process after it was successfully used to shoot action and rear-projection sequences for *How the West Was Won*. Additionally, the daytime Civil War battle footage was taken from the cut negative of *Raintree County*, filmed in Ultra Panavision when it was known as Camera 65. Turner Entertainment has a 35mm internegative on *HTWW* in which material from the combined three-panel negatives has been replaced by material from the original 65mm photography. No 65mm format was used on *The Wonderful World of the Brothers Grimm*.

Regarding the *Hamlet* article in the January issue, *Dr. Zhivago* was not filmed in 65mm, but 35mm anamorphic. Realife was not a 65mm process, but one that involved original photography on 70mm negative using Grandeur cameras, which was then optically reduced to 35mm and projected on large, wide screens using Magnascope lenses. Mr. Fisher also errs by including Cinerama in the formats used by Hollywood moguls to fight TV, since they all rejected it with the claim that 70mm prints were the only way to deliver stereo surround sound; this was standard when used with 35mm four-track magnetic prints, and possible with stereo variable area optical tracks after 1978. The 70mm format became a popular release medium between 1978 and 1984 because its magnetic tracks could deliver a more discrete stereo track than SVA.

Finally, Paul V. Markey's letter in the January issue ("Restoration Redux") shows not only a shocking ignorance of film history and technology, but also what appears to be an unfortunate trend of people so used to looking at low-resolution video that they would like to see the film resolution also reduced to that standard. Mr. Markey apparently

continued on page 91



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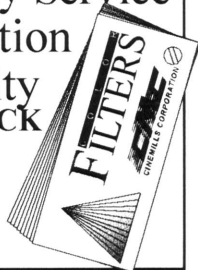


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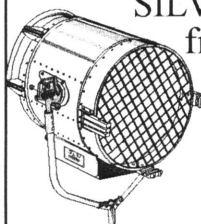
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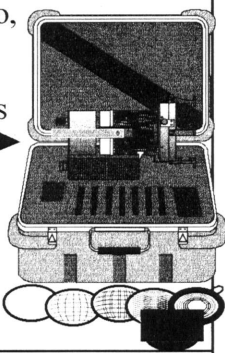
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The Post Process

Hybrid Digital/Opticals are a First

by Debra Kaufman

While many post houses are turning to digital technology for effects work, photochemical opticals haven't completely faded out of the picture. This fact was recently underscored by the work done by Pacific Title & Art (PTA) and sister facility Pacific Title Digital (PTD) on the recently restored *Star Wars* (see *AC* Feb. '97). PTA found innovative ways to combine traditional and digital technologies that maximized the best of both worlds and resulted in cost and time savings. In order to characterize these unique hybrid effects, PTA executive producer Phil Feiner and optical effects supervisor Chris Bushman came up with the term "dopticals."

Lucasfilm initially tapped PTA to work on *Star Wars* Special Edition because of their experience and expertise in traditional photochemical opticals. Established in 1919, the company has created titles and opticals for thousands of Hollywood films. In 1991, PTD opened its doors to provide services in the digital realm.

One portion of PTA's *Star Wars* assignment was to re-create the 154-blast laser battle between Imperial stormtroopers and Rebel defenders in the film's opening sequence; the company also worked on an additional 328 laser effects, for a grand total of 482. From the outset, the idea was to re-create the sequence optically. Despite all of the brouhaha over the power of digital effects, the photochemical process still makes more sense for some effects. Feiner explains, "For traditional effects like hold-frames, dissolves, fades, zooms-in or repositions, there's a more cost-effective throughput with opticals."

He adds that the sequence's laser effects were also better accomplished with photochemicals. "Digital film recorders have a 100 percent brightness level, and you can't go beyond that," Feiner says. "When you optically composite a bright light or lightsabre [the

laser sword favored by the Jedi Knights], you might have to go to 200 or 400 percent exposure. With an optical composite, you also get an elegant feathering."

This doesn't mean that the newly restored laser battle didn't take advantage of new technology. After sending the original negative to Technicolor for rewashing, PTA made full-immersion, contact, liquid-gate interpositives. Feiner points out that modern interpositives are lightyears beyond their 1977 counterparts: they can be fully timed and color-corrected; state-of-the-art Nikkor lenses have double the resolution of the Ektar lenses used in 1977; Kodak 5244 is a superior intermediate stock; and there are better printing methods.

When PTA turned in the laser battle sequence early, Lucasfilm broached the idea of their tackling an even more ambitious project: Luke Skywalker's Jedi training scene set aboard the *Millennium Falcon*. Though Lucas originally deemed the sequence — which involved 55 cuts and 19 visual effects shots — too difficult to re-create, Feiner believed he could do it with a hybrid doptical technique. He had never tried this particular process, but had already created a similar effect in *Last Action Hero*, and therefore knew, in principle, that it was possible.

In this scene, Obi-Wan Kenobi (Alec Guinness) instructs the young Skywalker (Mark Hamill) to don a heavy space helmet, which obscures his vision. The Jedi master urges his pupil to use the Force to battle a floating target drone that's firing lasers back at him. With his glowing lightsabre in hand, Luke does so with surprising results.

First, the PTD team scanned in original negative of the backgrounds and the elements to be composited, which had been shot against bluescreen. Each shot was composited on a Cineon workstation — at full Cineon resolution of 4K

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x 3K with 10-bit color depth — and then recorded to film and processed for dailies. After approving the compositing and color contrast, the PTD team returned to the digital data stored in Cineon, recording it out to film on PTD's proprietary film recorders again. This time, however, the film was not processed.

The "latent" image digital composite element was then brought to the optical department at PTA, where it was loaded into their motion-control optical printer. Using the original 1977 element, a rotoscoped laser sword was burned in. The exposed negative was then sent to the film lab for processing and printing. "It's a hybrid [of digital and optical] that's never been done before," says Feiner. "We used the best of both technologies."

The resulting shots, says Feiner, look better than the originals. In the 1977 version, the composited shots made the surrounding non-composited shots stand out; Lucas took the original negative of those non-composited surrounding shots and duped them to degrade the quality and match the 19 composited shots. In the 1997 version, digital technology and improved optical techniques have made such tactics unnecessary. As a result, the public will see the non-composited shots in the sequence for the first time in an undegraded, original form.

Ironically enough, the scanner and recorders PTD used on *Star Wars* Special Edition were originally designed for use on composites in *The Empire Strikes Back*. Built by the now-defunct Information International Inc., they weren't ready in time to do the work, and six years ago Feiner bought the equipment. Over the past four years, the units were brought up to spec and they were finally used for their original purpose: a George Lucas *Star Wars* project.

In an age in which digital techniques score most of the headlines, it's good to remember that opticals aren't about to disappear in the near future. Feiner notes that PTA has just finished its best year yet, and adds that he's planning on building the company's 12th optical printer, this one fully multi-format and motion-control. "If Lucasfilm could have done the *Star Wars* work faster, better, or cheaper digitally, they wouldn't have ordered these opticals from us," he concludes. ♦



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Production Slate

compiled by Andrew O. Thompson



Above: Worried wife Eliza D'Amico (Hope Davis) confides in her opinionated younger sister Jo Malone (Parker Posey) and her cerebral boyfriend Carl (Liev Schreiber) during a scene shot handheld by cinematographer John Inwood inside a station wagon. **Center:** Eliza enjoys a tender moment with her husband, Louis (Stanley Tucci), in the couple's suburban bedroom. **Bottom:** Eliza lends her ear to the chattering of abrasive partygoer Libby (Marcia Gay Harden) at a publishing fete where she hopes to locate Louis.

The Daytrippers by Eric Rudolph

A secret love letter found in a married man's suburban New York home spurs the plot of *The Daytrippers*, the first feature from writer/director Greg Mottola, a Long Island native who studied at Columbia University's graduate film school and the 1992 Sundance Filmmaker's Lab. In this dark comedy, the missive's ambiguous sign-off — "Love forever, Sandy" — prompts the man's extended family of in-laws to pile into a car for Manhattan, where they investigate his apparent transgression.

Consistently strong performances add realism to this quirky tale of dysfunctional relationships. Stanley Tucci shines in a small but crucial role as confused husband Louis D'Amico. Hope Davis (*Flatliners*, *Mr. Wrong*) plays his ingenious wife, Eliza, with compelling innocence. Other well-known names in the cast include indie mainstay Parker Posey, Liev Schreiber, Anne Meara, Marcia Gay Harden and Tucci's *Big Night* co-director Campbell Scott (who is also the film's executive producer).

Though rejected by the 1995 Sundance Festival, the film scored the Grand Jury prize at gadfly competitor Slamdance and beat out several Sundance winners (including *Welcome to the Dollhouse* and *Big Night*) for the Grand Prix award at France's Deauville Festival.

Mottola's directorial debut also earned the Audience Award at both Deauville and the Athens Film Festival. These festival wins helped secure solid domestic and international distribution for *The Daytrippers*, which was produced by filmmaker Steven Soderbergh (*Sex, Lies & Videotape*, *Kafka*) and Nancy Tenenbaum.

Shot for an initial working budget of well under \$100,000, *The Daytrippers* has done a complete

Daughter's Son.

Out of sheer practicality, director Mottola conceived *The Daytrippers* with a bare-bones photographic approach. For two years, he tried unsuccessfully to acquire finances for *Lush Life*, the feature screenplay he brought to the Sundance Lab. Producers Soderbergh and Tenenbaum agreed to provide Mottola with funding for an alternate, low-budget project. Four weeks later he delivered

The Daytrippers, an urban road movie which Inwood and crew filmed in a scant 16 days.

"Greg said, 'I understand that you could just put a lightbulb in a fixture and shoot. As long as we get an image, I'll have my film,'" recalls Inwood, who served as cinematographer on Mottola's



award-winning 1989 short *Swinging in the Painter's Room*, an 11-minute film shot in one take.

"Through sheer force of personality and writing talent, Greg had lined up this amazing group of actors," Inwood says. "My gaffer, Sean Sheridan, and I decided that Greg's idea of 'just getting an image' was a little too basic and would probably not be much fun for us. So we put together a package of lights we could handle with a small crew, and designed a lighting approach that would result in a picture that would look like a full feature film, and thereby live up to the quality of the acting and writing."



Achieving a feature look for *The Daytrippers* was made difficult due to an across-the-board deferral of crew payments, which proved necessary if the film was to maintain an initial production budget below the six-figure mark. "Each day we had to make phone

about-face, from being a film no one seemed to want to being in a position to have a healthy life for a low-budget indie feature," notes the film's cinematographer, John Inwood (*Bottomland*, *My*

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calls to line up a crew for the next day, because people were working without that immediate paycheck. One day we would have a complete, all-star crew, and the next day I would be down in some basement doing the tie-in," says Inwood.

The cinematographer credits his longtime gaffer Sheridan, as well as camera assistant Luke Eder and grip Keith Devlin (all of whom were on the set most days) for much of the quality of the film's onscreen image. (Kodak added assistance by offering film stock on a deferred-payment basis and allowing the production to use their offices as a stand-in for Tucci's workplace.)

The Daytrippers was filmed in Super 16 with an Aaton XTR on Kodak stock: the 200 ISO 7293 for interiors; the 50 ISO 7245 for day exteriors; and the brand-new 500 ISO 7298 for night shots. "We got some of the first of the new 98, which was great for us. However, despite our small lighting package, I didn't want to shoot the whole film at 500 ISO, because I like to stay away from fast stock as much as possible with 16mm. And besides, 45 and 93 just look so good."

As its title indicates, the film takes place on a single day, starting in the suburbs of Long Island and concluding in Manhattan. Inwood explains, "In the early third of the film everything is shot with a stable camera or a dolly, befitting the supposedly orderly suburbs. However, this is a comedic drama about a highly dysfunctional family, and as the story gets darker and moves into the city and day becomes night, we switched to a completely handheld camera and a much grittier photographic style, going from a 50 or 200 ISO stock to 500 ISO."

Crucial to lighting *The Daytrippers* quickly and effectively without the luxury of a consistent crew lineup or a single generator was a "decent-sized" Kino Flo fluorescent package and a group of small tungsten units, such as inkies, babies and tweenies. "We used the Kino Flos for a flattering soft main light and the tungsten units for back and edge light, or to produce background patterns," Inwood explains. "I love to mix soft and hard light. Soft light is flattering for actors and can be set up quickly, and by using small tungsten units for a harder edgelight or backlight, you can create some really unusual, and hope-

fully compelling, images."

Inwood uses the soft and hard light quite effectively, flattering his actors with the Kino Flos while adding depth and neatly separating the talent from the backgrounds with subtle, effective rim lighting. The extremely fair Hope Davis is a particular beneficiary of the soft light as the subject of several delicate and somewhat heartwrenching close-ups.

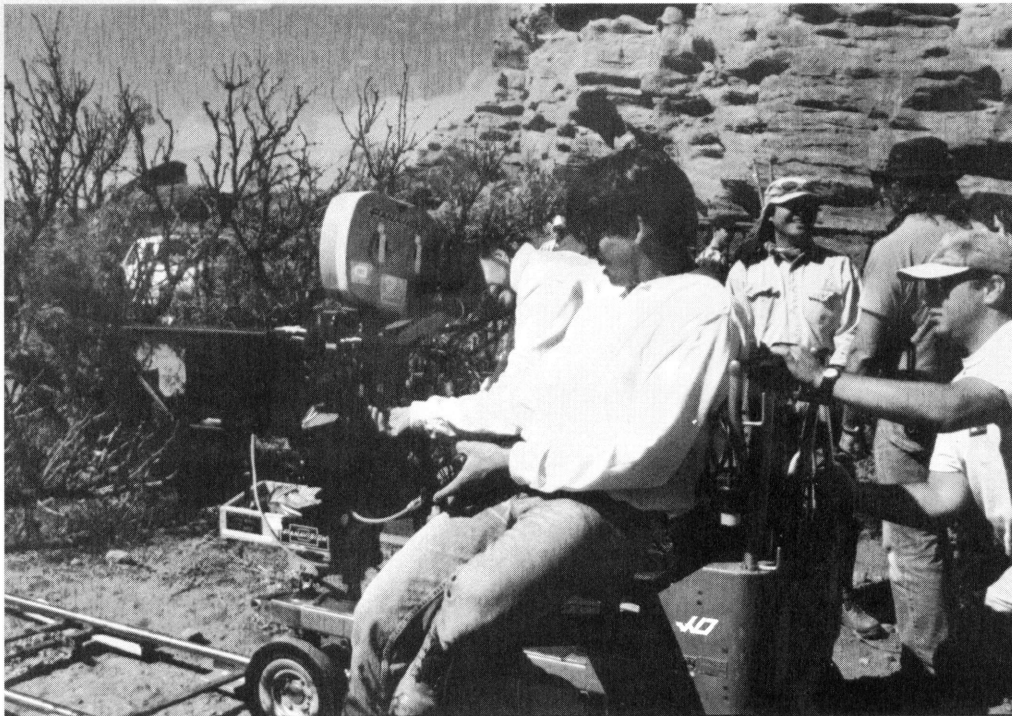
The Kino Flos were also a boon to the film's automobile sequences. "At least 10 to 12 pages of the script takes place in the car," Inwood explains. "There were no special camera mounts, and we certainly had no camera car; I sat in the car shooting the actors handheld. This was done for budgetary as well as artistic reasons. Greg wanted the audience to be right inside the car with the characters. I lit them using the available daylight and filled with two or three of the six-inch Kino Flos.

"For the Manhattan nighttime car interiors I lit the actors even less, or not at all, mostly using the available street light. One of my favorite scenes is one in which the cheery Christmas lights of 57th Street reflect on the dark, decidedly dour faces of the family as they drive by in the car." These shots highlight some of the benefits of the new and improved high-speed stocks; the Christmas lights do, in fact, register poignantly on the actor's faces, and armies of actual Christmas shoppers carrying bright red shopping bags are clearly visible in the background (illuminated with available light), adding further counterpoint.

Despite all the precautions taken to ensure an efficient, feature-look low-budget shoot, *The Daytrippers* production did encounter one of the nastier pitfalls of independent moviemaking: their camera was stolen on the very first day of production, before a single frame of the film had been exposed.

Inwood cautions that groups of "steal-to-order" camera thieves exist in the larger cities, and warns indie crews to be especially careful about security. Fortunately, the loss of the production's only camera did not hold up the shooting schedule. "A huge day of work had been scheduled, and we didn't know that the camera body, two mags and the lens were missing from the truck until we arrived at the location, way out on Long Island. We went ahead and pre-lit three

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Pictured from "Dead Man's Walk" are Yves Simoneau, director, James Sprattley, 1st AC, Edward Pei, director of photography, and Lou Cicero, dolly.

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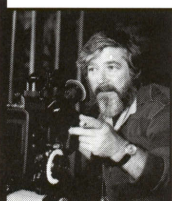
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Three vivid, emotionally motivated ambiances shot by cameraman Joe DeSalvo on a Moviecam Compact for *All Over Me*, the first feature from Alex Sichel. To soften the film's imagery, DeSalvo left the lens wide open rather than employing any filtration. The cinematographer notes, "I prefer that lack of depth in 35mm. It looks prettier."

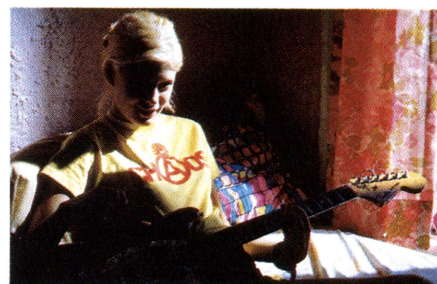


or four scenes, managed to get a replacement camera from Hand Held films, and made the whole day's schedule!"

All Over Me by Michael X. Ferraro

In her first feature, *All Over Me*, director Alex Sichel collaborated with her screenwriting sister, Sylvia, to provide what the siblings believe has long been missing from American cinema—the real thoughts and feelings of teenage girls. Set in the Hell's Kitchen district of New York City, the film follows the turbulent travails of 15-year-old aspiring riot-girl Claude (*To Die For*'s Alison Folland) as she struggles to make sense of her life, her friends, and her sexuality. After a fatal hate crime occurs in the neighborhood, Claude is forced to question her relationship with her beautiful, clingy best friend, Ellen (Tara Subkoff from *When the Bough Breaks*), and must decide whether to make some painful personal changes.

In that regard, the look of this 1997 Sundance Film Festival entry



flowed out of "being true to the emotional perspective of the character," says director Sichel, an alumnus of Columbia University's graduate film school. Helping her capture this "emotional realism" was cinematographer Joe DeSalvo (*Johnny Suede*, *What Happened Was...*, *The Wife*), a graduate of New York's School of the Visual Arts, who came highly recommended from his previous collaborations with producer Dolly Hall. "His work is very character-based, and beautifully lit," says Sichel. "I like the way he shoots people and faces."

All Over Me exudes a clean, timeless feel despite the film's modern setting. Says Sichel, "I wanted viewers to feel as if they had just been dropped down on the street of Hell's Kitchen. They had to believe in this world without suspending their disbelief. On the other hand, it's not a documentary-style film. Given the colors, lighting [and characters], there's a really emotional side to this story; we wanted the emotional truth to be expressed cinematically."

Toward that end, the filmmakers' preparation for the shoot included viewings of *Midnight Cowboy* and *Mean Streets*. In addition, Sichel, DeSalvo and production designer Amy Beth Silver (*Johns*, *Gummo*) took a field trip to an Edward Hopper retrospective at the Whitney Museum.

Notes DeSalvo of the film's palette, "We sat down and made up a color theme for each character. Claude's

Photos by P. Gupta, Bill Foley and Jo Wilden, courtesy of Fine Line Features.

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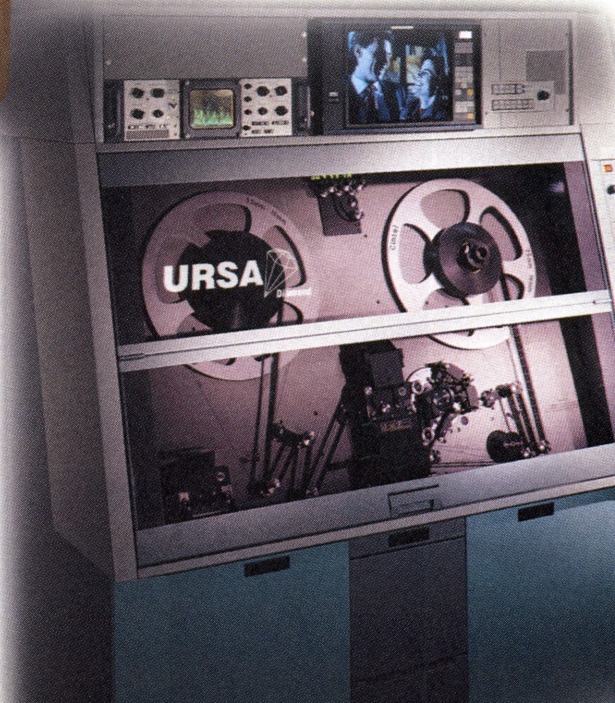
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colors were reds and red-oranges -- not romantic hues, but more powerful colors. Her room (where the girls spend much of the first half of the film) had a reddish, archie-pink mix we painted into it," whereas her fair friend Ellen brought a harsh, colder palette into the mix. These diametrical dynamics come into vivid play in one particular pre-dawn scene, when Ellen excitedly returns to the bed she often shares with Claude after spending the night with her newfound boyfriend, the thuggish Mark (*Higher Learning's* Cole Hauser).

"The light [in that sequence] has the bluish, silvery quality of Ellen's light, because it's about the experience [she's just had]," notes De Salvo. "I'm not sure how truly in love she is with the Mark character. I think she is more in love with the idea of having someone of her own, and there's kind of a false magic to that [which is reflected in the lighting choices]." Owing to the ambiguous sexual relationship between the characters — the Sichel sisters claim in the production notes that "everyone secretly knows that their best friend was their first real love" — the mood shifts when Ellen demonstrates to her friend what transpired between she and Mark.

"We did an interesting thing when Ellen leans in close to Claude, using her hair almost as if it were a filter," says DeSalvo. "The blonde hair sort of warmed the light that was falling on Claude's face, and it was really a beautiful moment; it transforms the bond between them. That's one of my favorite moments in the film. It's nice if you can actually use characters to light each other, because you can feel the energy between the two people. Alex and I discussed that a lot, and I have to give a lot of credit to Sylvia. She put a lot of really interesting visual details [into the script], which helped fuel both Alex's and my imaginations."

It was these minute yet highly personal details that director Sichel wanted to the film's photography to convey. "When you're at that age, and you have this best friend, a lot of what you look at is the other person's skin," she submits. "We wanted the up-close intensity of that age. The visuals were of this one girl looking so closely at the other one [that she] is trying to figure out whether she wants to be her, or is in love with her."

For such sexually driven scrutiny, DeSalvo often chose to move the camera as far back as possible in the tiny New York apartment location. He eschewed an 85mm lens for the Zeiss 135mm Distagon or even the 180mm, "just to soften the background, and emphasize the face," he explains. "I like to play with depth of field. Some people like to have films totally sharp and crisp, but I like to have layers to play with."

DeSalvo, who also operated, shot *All Over Me* with his traditional camera of choice, the Moviecam Compact. The tight schedule often necessitated the substitution of dolly shots for the handheld ones comprising 35 to 40 percent of the film. "You can't even tell that some of its handheld because the Compact is so light and easy to use," he raves. DeSalvo also appreciates the changeable LED display on the ground-glass screen, which allows the operator to select variable ground-glass framelines in the viewfinder.

DeSalvo generally left the lens wide open to soften the image, rather than using filtration. He explains that he "prefers that lack of depth in 35mm. I think it looks prettier."

The cinematographer says that his assistants — first AC Steve Calalang and second AC Robert Dembicki — "allowed [him] the creative indulgence" to work by quickly pulling focus with limited marks on the medium-speed stocks that were used — Kodak's 5245 for daytime exteriors, and 5293 for all night exteriors and interiors.

Explaining why he and Sichel were loathe to use high-speed film, DeSalvo says, "The main impetus was to keep the grain structure as tight as possible. In the past, I've found that low-budget films, and [those] with smaller distribution companies, tend to deal with labs that use an inferior print stock. Also, you often don't have the time to control the lighting as much as you want to. You just have to get the shot, so if you don't have the time to light all areas of the negative as much as you'd like to, and print down accordingly, it's better to have a stock that's more forgiving in the mid-tones and the blacks in terms of the grain."

Facing a tight 24-day shooting schedule, with split crews, DeSalvo was thankful that he and Sichel were able to plot things out extensively in prep; the

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Right: Willytec top-mounted on **Moviemcam SL** camera with 18mm Zeiss prime. No camera base plate necessary.

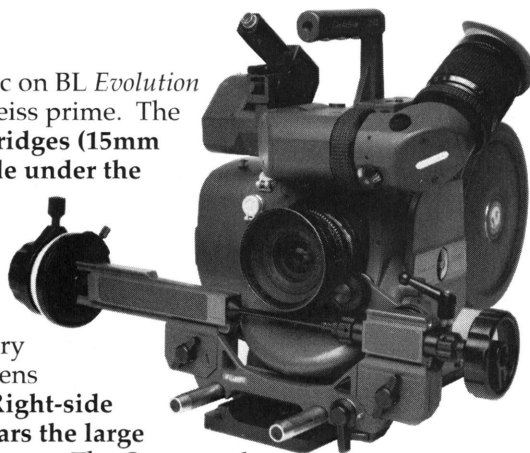


Moviemcam SL camera: Courtesy of Clairmont Camera

Price starts at
\$3,527.⁰⁰

as pictured on the **Moviemcam.**

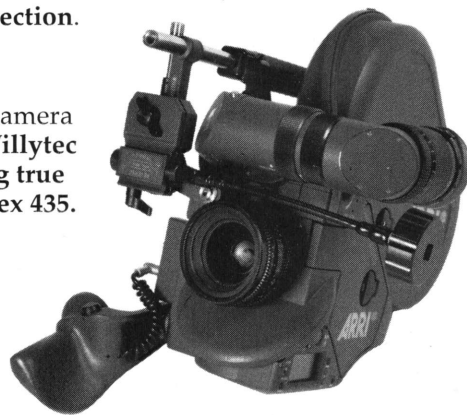
Right: Willytec on **BL Evolution** with 16mm Zeiss prime. The **two Studio Bridges (15mm or 19mm)** slide under the **mirror housing**, allowing the gear arm to reach lenses with focus rings very closed to the lens mount. The **Right-side Extension** clears the large **studio matteboxes**. The **One-speed** and **Deluxe 2-speed Knob** feature a **conical marking disc** that provides **clear off-axis viewing**.



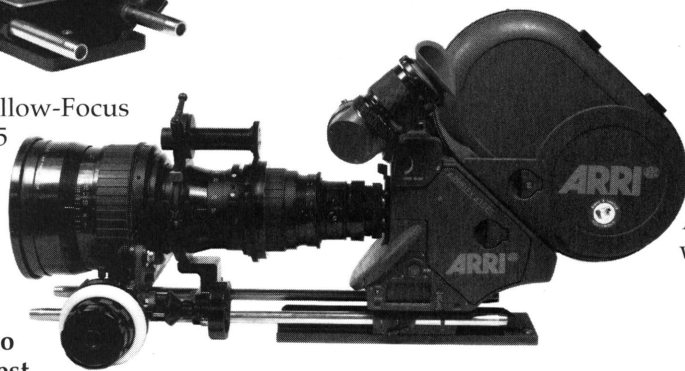
Left: Willytec on **BL Evolution** with 16mm Zeiss prime. The articulated **Universal Handheld Bracket** can be used on 15mm or 19mm iris rods (with 15mm or 19mm knuckle) to **orientate the knob in any direction**.



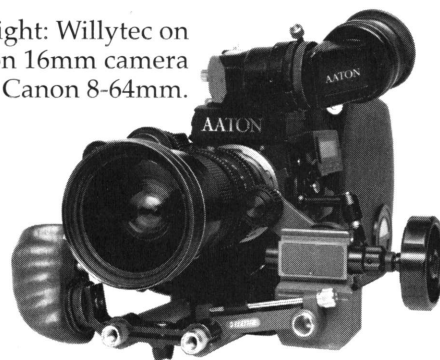
Right: Willytec on **Arriflex 435** camera with 25mm Zeiss prime. The **Willytec system is the only one allowing true handheld work with the Arriflex 435.**



Right: Willytec Follow-Focus on the **Arriflex 435** with **Angenieux 17-102mm zoom**. The **two Studio Bridges (15mm or 19mm)** are designed with a **very low profile** to fit under the largest lenses. The **Right-angle Attachment** enables the operator to comfortably pull focus on physically long lenses. The **Deluxe knob offers 2 speeds, always readily available.** The focus-puller can, in a single move, start on the faster speed and finish on the slower speed.



Right: Willytec on **Aaton 16mm** camera with **Canon 8-64mm**.



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pair shot-diagrammed an estimated 75 percent of the film on computer, which provided greater flexibility in the field. According to Sichel, this was crucial "because we had to come up with a way to cover a lot of things quickly."

That same spirit of preparedness pervaded the whole crew. DeSalvo says that key grips Vadin Fruman and Tony Cox "did a wonderful job rigging 4K Pars outside the [apartment] window with this very elaborate network of pipes that they swung 25 feet out over the roof. Essentially, this allowed me to have sunlight wherever I wanted it." The filmmakers also praised the efforts of grip Edwin Figero and gaffers Joe Quirk and Ray Flynn.

DeSalvo managed to manipulate the film's Kino Flo package to great effect, with a bit of a luminary assist from his characters — Claude and her new girlfriend Lucy (played by Leisha Hailey of the musical duo The Murmurs). "We used the KinoFlos to edge-light them evenly, but we really directed the light onto either Lucy or Claude's face. The side of the face that wasn't facing camera would then act as a bounce card, and bounce light up onto the other actor's skin. These techniques are pretty subtle; in a way, you feel them rather than see them. That's what excites me as a cinematographer, and it's also why the Sichel sisters made *All Over Me* in the first place."

Underground Fest Calls For Unusual Entries

The fourth annual Chicago Underground Film Festival is looking for the best in offbeat, subversive and cutting-edge film and video for its 1997 outing. Underground filmmaking has had a rich and varied history in the United States — the Forties through the Sixties brought us on pioneers like Maya Deren, the Kuchar Brothers, Kenneth Anger and Andy Warhol. In the Seventies and Eighties, filmmakers like John Waters, Richard Kern and Nick Zedd pushed the envelope even further with their outrageous and shocking work. Entries in all film and video formats are being accepted now through May 15, 1997. The festival takes place from August 13- 17.

Chicago Underground Film Festival, (773) 866 - 8660; e-mail, danute13@aol.com; website, <http://www.deafear.com/cuff>.

Spirit Awards Nominees

The nominations for the 12th annual Independent Spirit Awards were announced on January 9 at an IFP/West reception at Los Angeles' historic El Rey Theater. These honors will be awarded on March 22 at the traditional tent-covered ceremony on the Santa Monica beach, and for the first time will be televised live on the Independent Film Channel. Listed below are the nominees in categories of Best Cinematography, Best Feature, Best First Feature, Best Director and Best Foreign Film. AC will report on the awards festivities and the winners in an upcoming issue.

1997 Spirit Award Nominees

Best Cinematography

Roger Deakins, ASC, BSC

Fargo

Ken Kelsch

The Funeral

Robby Müller

Dead Man

Bill Pope

Bound

Rob Sweeney

Color of a Brisk and Leaping Day

Best Feature (given to the producer)

Dead Man

Demetra J. Macbride

Fargo

Ethan Coen

The Funeral

Mary Kane

Lone Star

R. Paul Miller, Maggie Renzi

Welcome to the Dollhouse

Todd Solondz

Best First Feature (given to the director)

Big Night

Stanley Tucci, Campell Scott

I Shot Andy Warhol

Mary Harron

Manny & Lo

Lisa Krueger

Sling Blade

Billy Bob Thornton

Trees Lounge

Steve Buscemi

Best Director

Joel Coen

Fargo

Abel Ferrara

The Funeral

David O. Russell

Flirting with Disaster

Todd Solondz

Welcome to the Dollhouse

Robert M. Young

Caught

Best Foreign Film (given to the director)

Breaking the Waves

Lars von Trier (Denmark)

Chungking Express

Wong Kar-Wai (Hong Kong)

L'America

Gianni Amelio (Italy)

Secrets & Lies

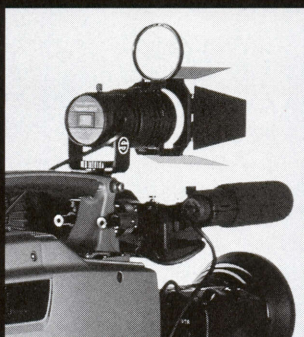
Mike Leigh (United Kingdom)

Trainspotting

Danny Boyle (United Kingdom)

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Raoul Coutard: Revolutionary of the *Nouvelle Vague*

The influential French cinematographer earns the ASC's 1997 International Award.

by Benjamin Bergery

While shooting *The Birth of Love*, a recently completed picture by French filmmaker Philippe Garrel, director of photography Raoul Coutard encountered conditions that would prove unnerving for any cinematographer. "There was no way of knowing what the actors were going to do," he relates. "For example, the actors arrived at the location in the morning and sat down wherever they could while we set up. Garrel would look over and say, 'They look comfortable just as they are, let's shoot the scene over there.' Garrel has a tendency to shoot only one take, but during that take, you have no idea where the actors are going to move. Therefore, my lighting had to cover all the possibilities. If an actor happened to walk into a light source, the gaffer had to be ready to stop it from falling."

Such an improvisational one-take production might have all the ingredients of a nightmare, but Coutard (pronounced Koo-tar) says that the experience made him feel a bit nostalgic. "We were shooting in black-and-white — Eastman Kodak Double X — and the spontaneity reminded me of my adventures in the beginning of my career," he offers.

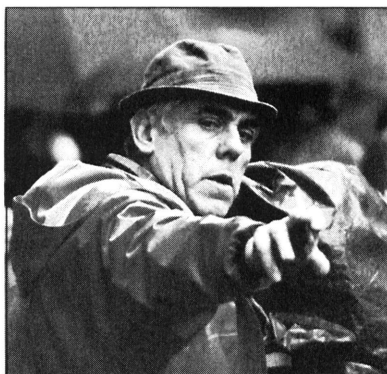
The period to which Coutard refers marked the explosion of the French New Wave (or *nouvelle vague*), a watershed movement in cinematic history that would revolutionize the film world in the 1950s and '60s.

Coutard, whose work helped to define the New Wave style, was recently honored for his achievements with the American Society of Cinematographers' 1997 International Award, presented at the organization's 11th annual awards

relatively unknown actors. Though Coutard collaborated with Jean-Luc Godard and François Truffaut on such landmark films as *Breathless* (1959) and *Jules and Jim* (1961), respectively, his analysis of the *nouvelle vague* is characteristically plain-spoken.

"There were a bunch of young guys working at the [film journal] *Cahiers du Cinéma* who made a lot of noise, saying, 'There's no reason that a bunch of old men should be making films, and not us.' They were right to speak up, because at the time it was very hard for a young person to make a feature."

As could be expected of a movement spearheaded by film critics — who in addition to Truffaut and Godard included Claude Chabrol (*Handsome Serge*, 1959), Jacques Rivette (*Paris Belongs to Us*, 1961) and Eric Rohmer (*The Sign of the Lion*, 1959) — theory preceded practice. In 1948, budding critic Alexandre Astruc coined the important notion of *caméra-stylo* — the camera as pen — urging filmmakers to work as freely with cameras as writers did with their implements. Famed French critic André Bazin, who co-founded *Cahiers du Cinema* in 1951 and served as its editor, championed a new realism. Three years later, Truffaut wrote "A Certain Tendency of the French Cinema," his seminal essay about directors as authors (*auteurs*). In it, he professed that certain directors endow each of their films with a uniquely



Photos courtesy of Raoul Coutard.

ceremony on February 23 at the Century Plaza Hotel in Los Angeles. Coutard became the fifth recipient of the honor, following past honorees Freddie Young, BSC; Jack Cardiff, BSC; Gabriel Figueroa, and Henri Alekan.

Coutard and other pioneers of the New Wave movement fostered a newfound freedom of expression with a spontaneous approach to image-making. The highly personal films that resulted were often shot on location with small crews, meager budgets and

Center: French femme fatale Brigitte Bardot as the scornful spouse Camille Javal in Jean Luc-Godard's *Le Meprix* (Contempt, 1963), one of many of films Coutard photographed for the groundbreaking auteur. Below: Revolutionary at work. Cinematographer Coutard blocks out a shot.

personal imprint.

Coutard submits, however, that this deference to the director as *auteur* is not always advantageous. "You can end up with a shooting script that is way too long, so you waste time during production on scenes that will end up on the cutting room floor," he says. The cinematographer also maintains that many *auteurs* of the *nouvelle vague* eventually evolved into conventional filmmakers. "When you look back, most of these people ended up sitting in the chairs of the people they had criticized. In my opinion, the only one who truly wanted to change filmmaking, the only real revolutionary, was Jean-Luc Godard."

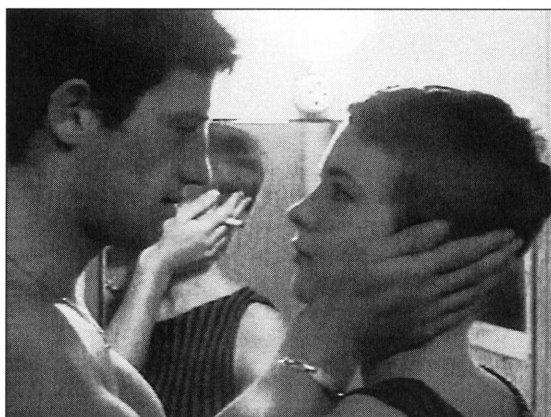
In French filmmaking circles, Coutard is sometimes referred to as a soldier, or even a "paratrooper," in allusion to his tour of duty in the former Indochina. On set, the cinematographer has been known to confound directors by quoting from *On War*, the treatise by Prussian strategist General Karl von Clausewitz: "When an operation has been decided, it must be executed." Indeed, there are aspects of Coutard's manner that evoke a soldier's demeanor. Tall, tough and confident, he appears as if he might have seen some action once upon a time; he speaks with almost military bluntness, and is not above using judicious curse words.

A native of Paris, Coutard lived through the German occupation during the Second World War. When the conflict concluded in 1945, the young man sought to quench his thirst for adventure by enlisting in the French army to fight the Japanese in the Pacific. "When you're 20," Coutard recalls, "you're ready to die for a cause, any cause." He ended up spending 11 years in the French colony that became Vietnam.

Although Coutard is reluctant to divulge details of his

wartime experiences, this was clearly a formative time for him. "War is a nightmare, but war is also a great revealer," he proclaims. "You're pushed beyond your capacities, and you see people for what they really are. Friendships in war are for real. If someone falls in an ambush, are you going to go get him or not? Is he going to get you out if you're in trouble?"

After leaving the army, Coutard remained in Vietnam and worked as a photojournalist for *Paris Match*, *Life* and other magazines. The memorable work of the news photographers from the Magnum agency — including the great Ernst Haas — highly influenced Coutard, who eventually met Haas during the latter's visit to



Saigon. Haas wanted to photograph an opium den, so Coutard took him to one. When Coutard questioned Haas as to how he could possibly capture an image in the dim, candle-lit penumbra, the esteemed photographer merely answered, "As long as one thing is detached from another, you can always shoot a photograph." Coutard says that this piece of wisdom factored into his location work many years later.

While in his early thirties, Coutard decided "to end the Asiatic dream, and go on to something new." He returned to France and began shooting, in his own words, "awful pictures" for the press, as



Left: Actress Anna Karina (a one-time wife of Godard) as a pensive prostitute in the director's 12-part *tableaux Vivre sa Vie* (*My Life to Live*, 1962). **Center:** Gallic gangster Michel Poiccard (Jean-Paul Belmondo) reassures his American femme Patricia Franchini (Jean Seberg) in a bathroom scene from *Breathless*. **Godard's directorial debut and his first collaboration with Coutard. This landmark piece of New Wave cinema pioneered reportage, a documentary style of handheld shooting that employed no artificial illumination. This particular shot is an exception in that Coutard substituted a Photoflood fixture for the dim ceiling bulb.**

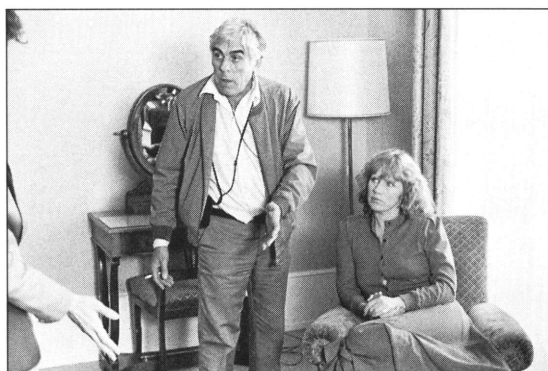
well as *romans-photos* (photo novels), a unique French form of comic strip that uses a series of photographs instead of drawings to tell melodramatic stories. Coutard explains that this task was "a little like filmmaking since it involved *découpage* [breaking down shots in a scene] and match-cutting."

Though Coutard's real ambition lay in photojournalism, he ended up as a cameraman on feature documentaries directed by Pierre Schoendoerffer, an old friend from his Vietnam days. Coutard soon mastered Eclair's Cameflex 35mm camera, which, though very noisy, was superb for handheld work; he even used it to notable effect in shooting an amorphous documentary in Afghanistan. But Coutard's big break arrived when his documentary producer, the legendary Georges de Beauregard, proposed him as the cinematographer on Godard's 1959 feature debut, *Breathless*.

The director of photography went on to establish the most important collaboration of his career with Godard. The pair shot 17 films together, including *A Woman is a Woman* (1961), *My Life to Live* (1962), *Contempt* (1963), *Les Carabiniers* (1963), *Band of Outsiders* (1964), *Pierrot le Fou* (1965), *Alphaville* (1965), *Two or Three Things I Know About Her* (1966), *La Chinoise* (1967), *Weekend* (1967) and *First Name: Carmen* (1983).

Coutard recalls that the basis for *Breathless* was a magazine article about a real-life gangster. The cinematographer says that Godard had paid a visit to producer Beauregard "with some newspaper and magazine articles he had selected, claiming that one

Right: Coutard shoots actor Michel Piccoli (playing sickly Soviet chess champion Liebskind) in Richard Dembo's *Dangerous Moves*, a 1983 Swiss production. Lower left: Coutard, actor Yves Montand, and Greek director Costa-Gavras (far right) confer during the making of *The Confession* (1970). Lower right: Noteworthy Norwegian actress Liv Ullmann sits to Coutard's side as he discusses a setup for *Dangerous Moves*.



could write a script based on any one of them. One was from a magazine called *Detective*, and Truffaut had written on the page, "This would make a good film."

Beauregard issued a few conditions to the novice director: his friend Truffaut would have to write the picture, and his pal Chabrol would have to agree to be a technical consultant. Both of Godard's colleagues had recently finished their first films — *The 400 Blows* and *Handsome Serge*, respectively — and gladly lent their talents to help Beauregard finance Godard's debut. The producer then demanded that Coutard be the cinematographer, a decision that initially irked Godard, who had some unconventional ideas for *Breathless*.

"Jean-Luc said that we would do a *reportage* [documentary], which meant shooting the whole film handheld [with the Eclair Cameflex] without using any lighting. The big idea was to do more realistic photography. No one had ever proposed shooting an entire fiction film handheld. Of course, we must not forget that there was no budget for the film,

and it was considerably cheaper to shoot handheld, on location and without lighting."

Coutard asserts that he accepted Godard's challenge out of ignorance. "I had no ideas about what cinema was. If I had known what was involved in shooting a handheld film without lighting, I would not have done it, because I would never have believed that I could do it correctly."

Additionally, because the Eclair Cameflex was neither silent nor crystal-controlled, the entire film had to be dubbed in postproduction. "If you look at the film closely," Coutard points out, "you'll notice that the rhythm of the actors' speech is peculiar, and there's a pause between lines. That's because all of the dialogue was spoken by Jean-Luc during each shot, and the actor would then repeat each of his phrases."

Breathless was shot sequentially, in the order of the finished film, yet still retained Godard's unusual spontaneity. According to Coutard, the director

wrote each day's shooting script on the previous evening. "You never knew what you were going to shoot the following day. He would arrive in the morning with the scene written, to which no one was privy. If we did everything he had written in the notebook, then he stopped shooting for the day and sent us home early, which really upset the producer."

As per Godard's instructions, Coutard did not employ artificial illumination in the film, save for two instances: in the hotel bathroom scene, a Photoflood was exchanged for a dim ceiling bulb; and the darkened newspaper office featured a few specially placed fixtures. Ironically, Coutard's initial contribution to the cinematographic look of the *nouvelle vague* can only be characterized as "anti-lighting," in combination with his free-flowing camerawork.

Even today, *Breathless* endures as a masterpiece of purity and simplicity. The film trades complicated storytelling for the complex telling of straightforward stories. Every facet of the film radiates rebellion: Coutard's handheld camera, the location lighting, the pioneering use of jump cuts, the throwaway lines and carefree affect of both Jean Seberg (as American femme Patricia Franchini) and Jean-Paul Belmondo (playing petty pilferer Michel Poiccard). It is a tribute to Godard's vision that nearly 40 years later, the film's once-radical style appears completely contemporary.

Coutard remembers that some filmmakers found themselves misled by the deceptive simplicity of *Breathless*. "After Jean-Luc did his film, a lot of people thought that you could do anything with anyone and come out with a film. So there were a lot of cinematic experiments that turned out to be catastrophes. These imitators were forgetting that Jean-Luc was not just a guy with talent, he was a guy with genius.

"He was the only director whom I could take risks with," Coutard adds. "If we tried something difficult, I would warn him that there might be a problem, and he would say, 'Fine, let's try it anyway.' I could be sure that if the result wasn't any good, we'd shoot it again. This allowed me to try things that I wouldn't have with other directors. Reshoots were impossible with other directors, because they were tied to their shooting schedules."

Coutard admits to a preference for Godard's brand of extemporaneous filmmaking, remarking, "For me, it's good to preserve the mystery of filmmaking. That's part of my desire in cinema; I like not knowing what's going to happen."

Coutard's chief cinematographic challenge in achieving the *nouvelle vague*'s signature spontaneity often meant sacrificing his own art of lighting. He developed a fast and flexible system for location lighting that simply entailed aiming a dozen ordinary 500-watt Photoflood-type bulbs at silver reflective material taped to the ceiling. The result was soft lighting that raised the room's overall level of ambience and allowed shots to be set up from virtually any angle in the room below. This technique also permitted Godard to set up his trademark 360-degree camera movements at any time, and granted *nouvelle vague* directors and actors unprecedented liberty to impulsively alter camera angles and shot blocking. Coutard concedes, however, that he would have preferred to do "Rembrandt-type lighting, rather than the low-contrast [illumination] of the early films. At the same time, I was satisfied by the way I managed the lighting. Given the limited time and means I had, the results were not that bad."

Coutard introduced further cinematographic approaches so as to keep pace with Godard's innovations in *mise en scène*. The night exteriors of *Breathless*, for example, were shot on a fast Ilford still camera stock that had been pushed one stop, but the short, still-camera loads limited takes to increments of 15 seconds. Pushed

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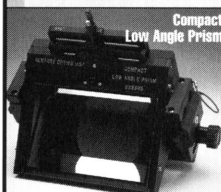
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Ilford stock also lent a unique grainy texture to *Alphaville*, Godard's dystopian mélange of the science-fiction and detective genres. Coutard's experimentation progressed on *Les Carabiniers*, for which he raised the contrast of the development, and performed his printing on an extremely high-contrast stock usually reserved for title sequences.

After introducing the handheld camera to French cinema, Coutard reinvented the dolly move in collaboration with his *nouvelle vague* directors. He and Godard created camera movements of dazzling originality, particularly in widescreen films such as *A Woman is a Woman* and *Contempt*. "We were among the first to use a so-called 'Western dolly,'" Coutard maintains. "We had a dolly with three wheels to facilitate sharp turns, and this gave the whole film a very mobile look."

Coutard also photographed four films for filmmaker François Truffaut, including *Shoot the Piano Player* (1960), *The Soft Skin* (1964), *The Bride Wore Black* (1967) and, most notably, *Jules and Jim* (1961). Coutard explains that *Jules and Jim* had more complex cinematography because "we had more time and more money. Also, François had a *découpage* [shot breakdown], so it was actually possible to prepare the lighting scheme ahead of time."

In contrasting Truffaut and Godard's framing styles, Coutard notes that "François would tell you what he wanted in the frame, whereas Jean-Luc would tell you what he didn't want. When you're framing for Jean-Luc, you don't follow the character, you follow a curve. He didn't care as much what one saw as he did about the movement itself, whether it was a curve or a straight line."

As many of the *nouvelle vague*'s novice filmmakers became more seasoned, the importance of elaborate imagery grew, allowing Coutard to elevate his lighting to a level of sophistication closer to that of his own taste. Jacques Demy's first feature, *Lola* (1961), afforded Coutard the opportunity to mix his trademark ceiling bounce with


more direct lighting.

Coutard returned to a *reportage* style (and the subject of Indochina) with handheld camera work on Pierre Schoendoerffer's *The 317th Section* (1965), which was shot in neutral Cambodia during the American incursion into Vietnam. In Coutard's opinion, "This is one of the best-made war movies — at least it's true to my experience. For example, you never see the enemy, you just distinguish silhouettes or see bodies."

Perhaps the culmination of Coutard's more expressionistic lighting is to be found in his cinematography for Greek-born director Constantin Costa-Gavras. The cameraman lent appropriate moods to the Academy Award-winning political thriller *Z* (1969) and particularly *The Confession* (1970), a film on which he often worked with penumbras, placing his exposure on the toe of the sensitometric curve and using a direct hard light that befit the subject matter of interrogations.

In surveying a career that has encompassed more than 80 feature films, Coutard does see one constant that factors into all of his choices. "I've always felt that when you decide to make a film it has to be like a love story," he says. "You have to love the director or the script, and share a lot with the crew. The film can only work if it's a love story; if it isn't, you shouldn't bother doing the film. Note that this doesn't necessarily mean that the film will be good, because love stories aren't always happy."

When asked about his frequent sacrifice of lighting for the sake of *mise en scène*, the *nouvelle vague* soldier replies, "If you have a choice, you should always sacrifice time you would use to light for the sake of the director, assuming that the director is going to use the time well. No one will ever go see a film because the cinematography is *magnifique*. The best case happens when — as with *Breathless* or *Jules and Jim* — you come out of the film feeling overwhelmed. And you don't single out the directing, the acting or the cinematography. You just feel that the film is perfect, although it never really is." ♦



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Highway to Hell

Cinematographer Peter Deming lends creepy noir ambience to director David Lynch's latest detour, *Lost Highway*.

by Stephen Pizzello

"A work of art in itself is a gesture and it may be warm or cold, inviting or repellent."

—Robert Henri, *The Art Spirit*



On a sunny December day in the Hollywood Hills, David Lynch sits in a deck chair on the outdoor patio of his filmmaking headquarters, a two-story modernist building that houses the aptly named Asymmetrical Productions. He is surrounded by the tools of the painter's trade: an oversized wooden easel, drippy paint cans, a scattered selection of brushes. Resting against a nearby wall is an unfinished example of his oeuvre: a large chunk of roast beef adhered to a canvas with an acrylic glaze, flanked on either side by the simi-

Photos by Suzanne Tenner, courtesy of October Films.

larly embalmed corpses of a tiny frog and sparrow. Scratching at the salt-and-pepper stubble on his unshaven chin, Lynch appraises his creation. "That roast beef has gone through a strange metamorphosis," he says, folding his arms. "It was bigger when I started, but one day a squirrel came by and took a big hunk out of it. I'm kinda workin' with it."

The line is classic Lynch, a collision of avant-garde eccentricity and folksy good humor. It's quotes such as this that have led media pundits to lampoon the director as some sort of cinematic idiot savant — the weird but brilliant neighborhood kid who occasionally comes over to show off something repulsive to that he's dug up in his backyard. But the David Lynch that I encounter is clearly no fool; he is well aware of his image, and is most likely its canny architect. This is, after all, the man responsible for *Eraserhead*, the ultimate midnight movie; the director who unleashed Dennis Hopper's psychotic alter ego, Frank Booth, upon unsuspecting audiences in *Blue Velvet*; the same David Lynch who once staged a one-man home invasion of the entire nation, swamping suburbia's television sets with the outlandish images of *Twin Peaks*. He is, in short, the high llama of existential horror, hero to all who find life to be just a little bit *strange*.

Still, for someone who at various points in his career has been branded "the Czar of Bizarre," "the Wizard of Weird" and "the psychopathic Norman Rockwell," Lynch seems a pleasant enough fellow. When asked to explain how his rather unique thought processes conspire to conjure up his cinematic visions, the director assumes a sincerely thoughtful expression. "Everything sort of follows my initial ideas," he offers. "As soon as I get an idea, I get a picture and a feeling, and I can even hear sounds.

The mood and the visuals are very strong. Every single idea I have comes with these things. One moment they're outside of my consciousness, and the next moment they come in with all of this power."

But what is it that triggers these transcendent states? "Sometimes if I listen to music, the ideas really flow," Lynch offers. "It's like the music changes into something else, and I see scenes unfolding. Or I might just be sitting quietly in a chair and *bing!* — an idea will hit me. At other times, I might be walking down the street when I see something that's meaningful and inspires another scene. On anything that you start, fragments of ideas run together and hook themselves up like a train. Those first fragments become a magnet for everything else you need. You may remember something from the past that's perfect, or you may discover a brand-new thing. Eventually, you get little sequences going.

"Before you think of anything, the whole landscape is open," he concludes. "But once you start falling in love with certain ideas, the road you're on becomes

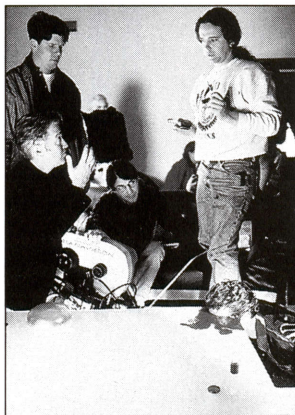
very narrow. If you concentrate, ideas will come to that narrow road and finish it."

To this point in his career, Lynch has led movie audiences down some very twisted roads indeed. This time around, with the help of cinematographer Peter Deming (*Evil Dead 2*, *Hollywood Shuffle*, *House Party*, *Drop Dead Fred*, *My Cousin Vinny*, and the upcoming comedy *Austin Powers: International Man of Mystery*), he has unleashed *Lost Highway*, a neo-noir nightmare that plays like an unholy marriage of *Body Heat* and *Altered States*. Violent, non-linear, and shockingly odd, the film may baffle and even offend many viewers, but it certainly reaffirms Lynch's considerable talents as a visualist.

The plot, such as it is, tracks the strange tale of Fred Madison (Bill Pullman), a jazz saxophonist whose marriage to a dour, raven-tressed sex kitten (Patricia Arquette) is decidedly on the rocks. Shortly after someone begins breaking into the couple's home and vid-

Opposite: Renee Madison (Patricia Arquette) cuts a sultry figure within the moody interior of her home. Cinematographer Peter Deming notes that director Lynch loves inky visuals, and feels that "a murky black darkness is scarier than a completely black darkness."

Opposite inset: Incarcerated for the alleged murder of his wife, Fred Madison (Bill Pullman) is about to experience a dramatic change in personality. Deming augmented the moment with a wavy blue overhead light. This page, inset: Lynch (lower left), Deming (standing, left), first AC Scott Ressler and special effects / makeup coordinator Michael Burnett preside over the grisly demise of a drug peddler (Michael Massee). This page, bottom: Classic noir lighting enhances the *Lost Highway* Hotel.





Above: Fred Madison is escorted to his prison cell. An old-fashioned Los Angeles fire station — complete with cobblestone floor — was retrofitted with small overhead fixtures to create eerie pools of light. **Right:** Teenage garage mechanic Pete (Balthazar Getty) meets his match when he strikes up a romance with a buxom blonde moll (Patricia Arquette).

eotaping them as they sleep, the wife is murdered, and Fred is ushered to an amenity-free suite in the Graybar Hotel (a.k.a. prison).

The setup is textbook film noir, but things soon takes a sharp turn toward the surreal. While languishing in his cell, Madison suddenly and inexplicably morphs into a teenaged garage mechanic named Pete (Balthazar Getty). Released from the clink by the baffled authorities, who tail his every move, Pete soon finds himself lusting after the sultry blonde moll (Patricia Arquette again) of a short-tempered crime boss (Robert Loggia). His infatuation gets him in dutch with the gangster, who subsequently employs a full arsenal of scare tactics — such as introducing the youthful grease monkey to a truly bizarre mystery man (Robert Blake) who has no eyebrows and the apparent ability to be in two places at once.

All of this, of course, must be seen to be believed, which is no doubt part of Lynch's master plan. Early press notes for the film described it simply as "a psychogenic fugue," and the director himself offers no further hints about the movie's true meaning. "The unit publicist was reading up on certain mental disorders during production, and she came upon this true condition called 'psychogenic fugue,' which is where a person

gives up himself, his world, his family — everything about himself — and takes on another identity," Lynch relates. "That's Fred Madison completely. I love the term *psychogenic fugue*. In a way, the musical term *fugue* fits perfectly, because the film has one theme, and then another theme takes over. To me, jazz is the closest thing to insanity that there is in music."

Some viewers may prescribe a straitjacket for Lynch after experiencing *Lost Highway*, but adventurous filmgoers will be treated to a torrent of dazzling images that defy indifference: a pitch-dark hallway that looms like a tenebrous abyss; Pullman's transformation into Getty, a sequence which seems inspired by a tab of bad acid; an opulent mansion that serves as a proscenium for porn; a nocturnal interlude of dusty desert coitus caught in the headlights of a car.

Like most of *Lost Highway*, these scenes have the febrile quality of a dream. By his own assertion, Lynch is "not an intellectual thinker," but an instinctual artist whose primary motivations are mood, texture, and emotion. "Film noir has a mood that everyone can feel," he says. "It's people in trouble, at night, with a little bit of wind and the right kind of music. It's a beautiful thing."

In order to interpret Lynch's existential directives, his

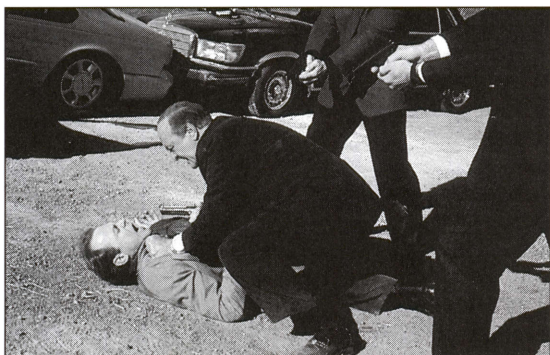
closest collaborators must attune themselves to his singular mindset. Lynch's longtime production/costume designer, Patricia Norris, says that she and the director have developed a strong creative kinship after years of working together. "We both have the same idea of what 'ugly' is — in terms of both decor and people," Norris submits. "All rooms come out of people, and if you understand who the characters are, you understand how they live. Most decorating conveys what's not written, and gives you a sense of the people. In *Lost Highway*, for example, the porno guy's mansion is really awful-looking — over the top and in bad taste. Everything is too big, and it looks as if he probably had someone else furnish it for him. We took a very different approach to the Madisons' house, because we wanted their relationship to be mysterious and nebulous. We decorated their place very sparingly with the kind of jazzy, Fifties-



style 'atomic furniture' that David favors; the look was basically 'a phone and an ashtray.'"

Although cinematographer Deming has not worked with Lynch for nearly as long as Norris, he benefitted from his prior experiences with the director on television commercials, the short-lived television series *On the Air*, and the HBO omnibus *Hotel Room*. "David's not a big fan of prep; he doesn't like to be pinned down too much," Deming says. "Before

shooting began on this film, we only talked specifically about two scenes: the first involved the hallway in Fred Madison's house, and the other was the love scene in the desert. We discussed different levels of *dark* — dark, 'next door to dark,' gradations like that. To figure out exactly what he meant, I would reference things we had done together, or other work he had done. The colors David was most interested in were browns, yellows and reds. We wound up shooting a lot of the film with a



chocolate #1 filter, which helped me get the look that David wanted. The lab felt that it was the most difficult filter to reproduce in timing.

"In testing, I ran into a bit of a problem using the chocolate filter at night," he submits. "The filter factor was a stop and a third, and it just ate up the shadows; you couldn't see into the shadow areas at all. Knowing the way David likes darkness, the chocolate filter was too much of a wild card when we were shooting at the low end of the exposure curve. We tried using chocolate gels on the lights, but that also proved to be a little too thick.

"What I ended up doing was having Ron Scott, the timer at CFI, time in the effect to the scene. I'd give him two gray scales: one normal and one with the filter in the camera. He would match the normal one to the filtered one and apply that correction to the whole scene in varying densities. It wasn't my preferred way of doing things, but in the long run I think it was better because it gave the night scenes a slightly different look, even scene to scene. David grew to like the workprint he had watched for six months, and he didn't want

to change that. I did one timing for the movie which was fairly consistent with the chocolate look we had designed for the day work, but it wasn't really happening, so we went back to what we had in the workprint to a large degree, improving it in places where it wasn't quite right. We wound up with a movie that has a different and non-uniform look."

Working in true anamorphic widescreen (2.40:1), Deming shot most of the film on Eastman Kodak's 5293 and 5298 stocks, and always deployed a Fogal stocking behind his lenses. He says that his choice of stocks was dictated by practical considerations and plain common sense. "Even when we were outside, we would somehow always end up shooting late in the day or under trees," he

submits. "With the chocolate filter and some 85 correction, I really couldn't get away with anything but 93 — which was fine, because I like the 93 a lot. Normally, I shot 93 when I had enough light. I used the 98 for anything that took place at night. I might have done things differently if this hadn't been an anamorphic film, but with anamorphic you have to get at least a 2.8 whenever you can to make it look really nice. Sometimes we were a little below 2.8, and on one or two occasions we had to shoot wide-open. I would shoot 93 more at night on a flat [1.85] movie, when you can shoot with a lower stop."

Deming says that his biggest challenge on the show was trying to accommodate Lynch's love of dark, inky visuals. "It was a struggle," he concedes. "I know what David likes; if he had his way, everything would be a little bit underexposed and murky, which is murder for me. On this film, I often found myself riding the bottom edge of the film's latitude. I didn't want to overexpose the images and print them down, because they would have had too much contrast. I wanted the overall look to be low-contrast in relation to the

day work at the Madison house and in the rest of the movie."

Scenes within the Madisons' home — a practical location with low, seven- to eight-foot ceilings — posed a number of logistical difficulties. Although the filmmakers were able to alter the structure a great deal — by replacing the living room's large picture window with two very small vertical windows, and adding a skylight — the house's cramped interior forced Deming to plot out some very economical lighting setups. "It was one of those situations, particularly in the daytime, in which we just put lights where we could," the director of photography relates. "For daylight scenes, we were coming in from the outside, primarily with HMI Pars. We also bounced light down through the skylight. Most of our fill lights were Kino Flo banks, which allowed us to keep down the obvious shadows on the walls. The bedroom was a little different. We used a Dino on a Condor outside because there was a good-sized window we could work with, but there was only one day scene in the bedroom."

Night scenes at the house further complicated matters for the

Left: Irked by the poor etiquette of a passing driver, Mr. Eddy (Robert Loggia) offers some friendly roadside advice. The chase preceding this scene was shot undercranked at frame rates ranging from 20 fps down to 4 fps to lend it a "superspeedy" feel. Below: The Mystery Man (Robert Blake) stands vigil in a dimly lit desert shack.



The Madisons confront the shaky state of their marriage. Production designer Patricia Norris enhanced the nebulous nature of the couple's relationship by decorating their home sparsely and in muted tones. "The look was basically 'a phone and an ashtray,'" she says.



crew. "Usually in a setup like that you would work off practical light sources," Deming says. "That's what we did most of the time, although there were scenes without any visible practical fixtures; in those cases you just put something up and hope it's not too bright and obvious. For the night stuff we used a lot of paper lanterns. When you're shooting anamorphic, you normally have a lot of room below the frame line; usually you have room above as well, but not at the house we were using. We'd hide lights and hang them and jam them in corners where we could. Sometimes we would pin bounce material and shoot a light through the shot; because there was no smoke you wouldn't know it. My gaffer, Michael Laviolette, made a hard internal rig for the lanterns that took two 500-watt Photofloods. So we were dealing with a 1K light which, even with heavy diffusion on a lantern, was a lot of light in a small place like that. The lanterns were made out of pretty thick paper. Sometimes when we were dealing with a bigger set we would use an 8' x 8' light grid and a 12' x 12' muslin."

For certain key scenes, super-minimal lighting schemes were employed to great effect. A particularly impressive example of this strategy is the filmmakers' sepulchral rendering of the Madison home's main hallway, which has a foreboding quality reminiscent of the work of one of Lynch's favorite painters, Francis Bacon. Achieving

this look required some deft interplay between the various crewmembers.

"Fortunately, the hallway was a setting we could control, even though we were shooting at a real house," says Deming. "Patty Norris and her crew physically altered the structure, making the hallway as long as possible. She also helped me by putting Bill Pullman in dark clothes, and by painting the walls a color that wouldn't reflect too much light. To cap things off, we hung a black curtain over the windows at the end of the hall."

Because the building's ceilings were so low, Deming opted to light the space primarily with a single, slightly diffused 2K zip light suspended directly above the camera. He used cutters and black wrap to perfect the angle of the light, relying on the high-speed 98 film stock to do the rest. "The 98 can really pick up details in the dark, so I knew that we were in trouble if the end of the hallway didn't disappear to the naked eye," says Deming. "David feels that a murky black darkness is scarier than a completely black darkness; he wanted this particular hallway to be a slightly brownish black that would swallow characters up. After we had finished the shot and sent it to the lab, I called the color timer and told him, 'As Bill Pullman walks down the hall, he should vanish completely, because if I see him down there I'm never going to hear the end of it.'"

The utilization of Kino Flos lent an eerie ambience to other sequences in the house. In one shot, Bill Pullman steps into a hallway so dark that he seems to be walking through a wall. A single Kino Flo created the mere hint of depth along the sides of the hallway entrance. The next scene shows Pullman gazing at his reflection in a mirror within the tomb-like confines of a small room. "The spot where David hung the mirror was only about six feet high," Deming says. "We put a Kino Flo up above, gelled it with chocolate and cut it severely. It was the only thing I could use to keep Bill from looking too ghoulish. We shot that the first day, and when it came up in dailies I thought it was underexposed. After the lights in the screening room came up, I said to David, 'We need to do that mirror shot again.' He looked at me as if I were crazy and replied, 'No way, I love that shot!'"

The filmmakers veered toward the opposite end of the photographic spectrum while shooting a hallway scene set within the opulent mansion of a porn-peddling hustler (embodied to oily perfection by Michael Masee). As a disoriented Balthazar Getty stumbles along the passageway, it begins to spin kaleidoscopically amid a barrage of lightning effects provided by two large, old-fashioned carbon-arc machines. "Lightning is an issue that's very close to David's heart," says Deming. "He doesn't like electronic lightning machines, because the look they create is very clean. With carbon arcs, there's a certain color-shift in the flashes; they sort of warm up and cool off. In this particular scene, one of the units we used was bouncing off two mirrors aimed at the end of the hall, and the other was positioned above a skylight. We had the camera and another smaller lightning box on a doorway dolly, and we tracked backwards as Balthazar walked toward us. I had a tiny eyelight on him, and the camera was attached to a tilting Dutch head.

"To make everything spin, we used a Mesmerizer; it's an aspherical element that clips onto the end of the lens, and you can rotate



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Lajos Koltai earned some 60 credits in Europe, including *Mephisto*, *Colonel Redl*, *Time Stands Still* and *Meeting Venus*. He also photographed *White Palace*, *Born Yesterday*, *When a Man Loves a Woman*, *Wrestling Ernest Hemingway*, *Just Cause*, *Home for the Holidays* and *Mother*. His current project is *Out To Sea*.

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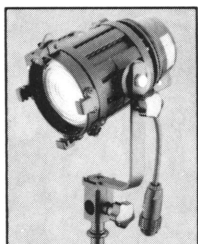
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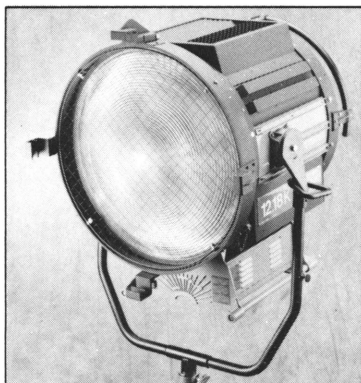
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it. When you use it with a flat lens, the image will squeeze and get wider as you spin it. As we were dollying, I was Dutching the camera and spinning the Mesmerizer; all the while, David was blaring the piece of music that would accompany the scene in the finished film, which allowed us to take our camera cues directly from the music."

Equally spectacular is a later shot of actors Getty and Arquette engaging in their nocturnal desert love scene, illuminated only by the white-hot headlights of a car. "That situation involved things you're taught never to do — front-lighting and overexposing," says Deming. "When we talked about the love scene in prep, David said he wanted the actors to be glowing. He didn't want to see any details except their eyes, noses, mouths and hair. We lit them with tungsten Pars which were supposed to simulate the headlights of their car, and we overexposed by about six-and-a-half stops. The final effect is very surreal; David knew it was not the 'technically correct' way to do things, but it worked for the movie."

The cinematographer notes that Lynch often comes up with his most inspired cinematic riffs on the set, sometimes while a sequence is being shot. "A lot of ideas would come up on the day of filming, after he'd gotten together with the actors and blocked out the scene," Deming asserts. "There's always a certain amount of logistical preparation, but when you're working with David you have to be ready for anything."

Lynch confirms that he encourages his crews to transcend the technical and logistical tenets of traditional film production. Intent on creating motion pictures with primal impact, he allows his fantasies free reign, and frequently improvises in order to commit them to film. "When you first get an idea, you're imagining it, but eventually you're out there in the real world," the director notes. "There are little holes and blurs in the imagination, and it's not totally complete. But when an actress arrives on the set in her costume, you suddenly have a concrete element, and a whole new bunch of things can happen.

You can be painfully aware that something's wrong, and you have to fix it. Or you can be blown away by something odd that happens. The crew might be hanging a lighting fixture that's flopped over and blowing light where it's not supposed to be, but I might see it, grab Pete and say, 'Look at that.' Even if it's not right for the scene we're doing, we sometimes save the idea and use it later. Little things like that always happen, and it's useful to store them away."

The director recalls that such a moment arose during the filming of a scene set in Fred Madison's prison cell, just prior to the character's hellish transmutation. "I wanted Fred Madison's face to go completely out of focus," says Lynch. "We had a black screen hanging behind Bill Pullman, and the camera had to be locked off for the scene. I told Pete to start de-focusing the lens, but he couldn't get the image as far out of focus as I wanted; he had reached the end of the lens. I said, 'Well, we've got a problem.' He replied, 'The only thing we can do is to take the lens out.' So I said, 'Okay, take it out.' He popped the lens on and off the camera as we did the shot, and it looked beautiful! We dubbed that technique 'whacking,' and after that I started going a bit whack-happy — but only when it suited the picture."

Surprisingly, Pullman's mindbending metamorphosis into Getty was not accomplished via computer-generated special effects, but rather with a careful combination of in-camera techniques and cutting-room trickery. The film's editor, Mary Sweeney (who also co-produced *Lost Highway*), reveals that a makeup effects expert constructed a special "fake Fred head" that was covered with slimy artificial brain matter and then carefully intercut with shots of the real Bill Pullman. She explains, "That sequence was completely designed by David, and we constructed it in the editing room, working entirely from elements he had shot on film."

In-camera trickery added adrenalin to other sections of the movie as well. For an operatic shot of a burning shack, the crew

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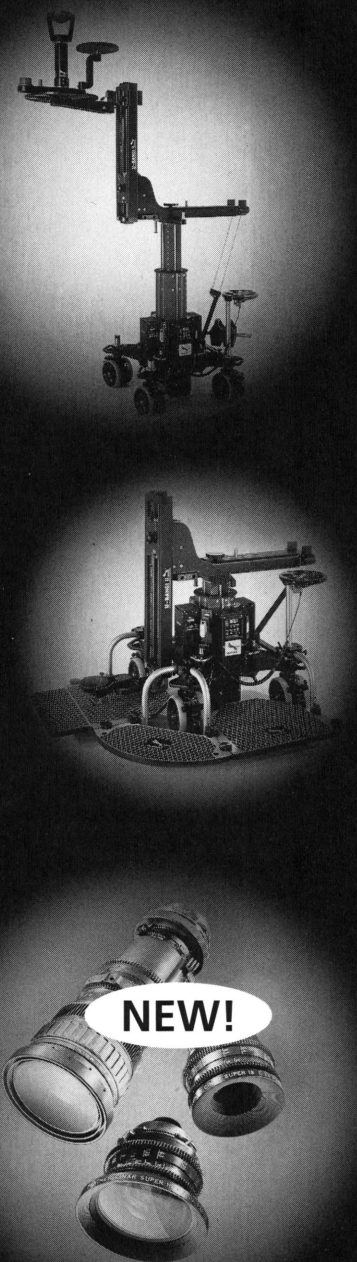
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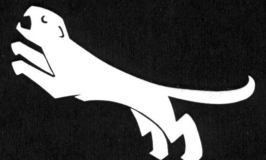
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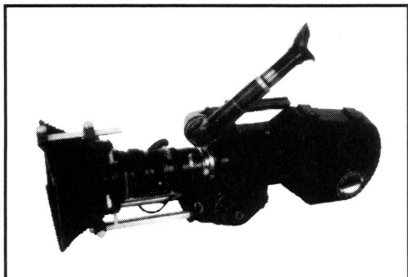
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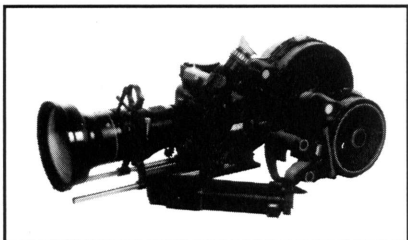
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deployed four cameras: the Panavision Platinum that served as A-camera throughout production; the Panavision Gold II B-camera; a Mitchell owned by Lynch (with a mount that Panavision had converted to accept the company's Primo lenses); and an extra camera body for a Steadicam. The fiery destruction of the ramshackle structure was filmed at four different speeds: 24 fps, 30 fps, 48 fps and in reverse at 96 fps with the Mitchell. "We just turned all of the cameras on and let it rip," Deming recalls. "I think one of the tighter shots done at 48 was later slowed down in post, but the footage in the film is primarily the stuff we shot overcranked in reverse."

Lynch's Mitchell was also used to record the moment when Getty's mechanic first sets eyes on the gangster's buxom girlfriend, who strolls through a garage interior and out into bright sunlight. Once again, the camera's speed control was set to 96 fps. "That shot presented a bit of a problem for me," says Deming, "because when you operate the Mitchell it doesn't unsqueeze the shot, so you're looking at really thin people. To shoot that fast with the filtration we were using I had to go to a higher-speed stock, and I knew that its limited latitude would make the exterior at the end of the shot blow out completely. I talked to David about it, but he just said, 'Great, the dreamier and weirder you can make it look, the better.' As a result, the exterior part of the sequence is white-hot, and I think we even timed it up to be brighter. In addition, the shot we used had a little flicker from the dancing of the light — the camera wasn't a sync model. When I saw the shot in dailies, I said, 'We should redo that,' but David vetoed me again! I told the same thing to the timer, and he said, 'Doing it over would be a big mistake.' He knew that it worked for the picture."

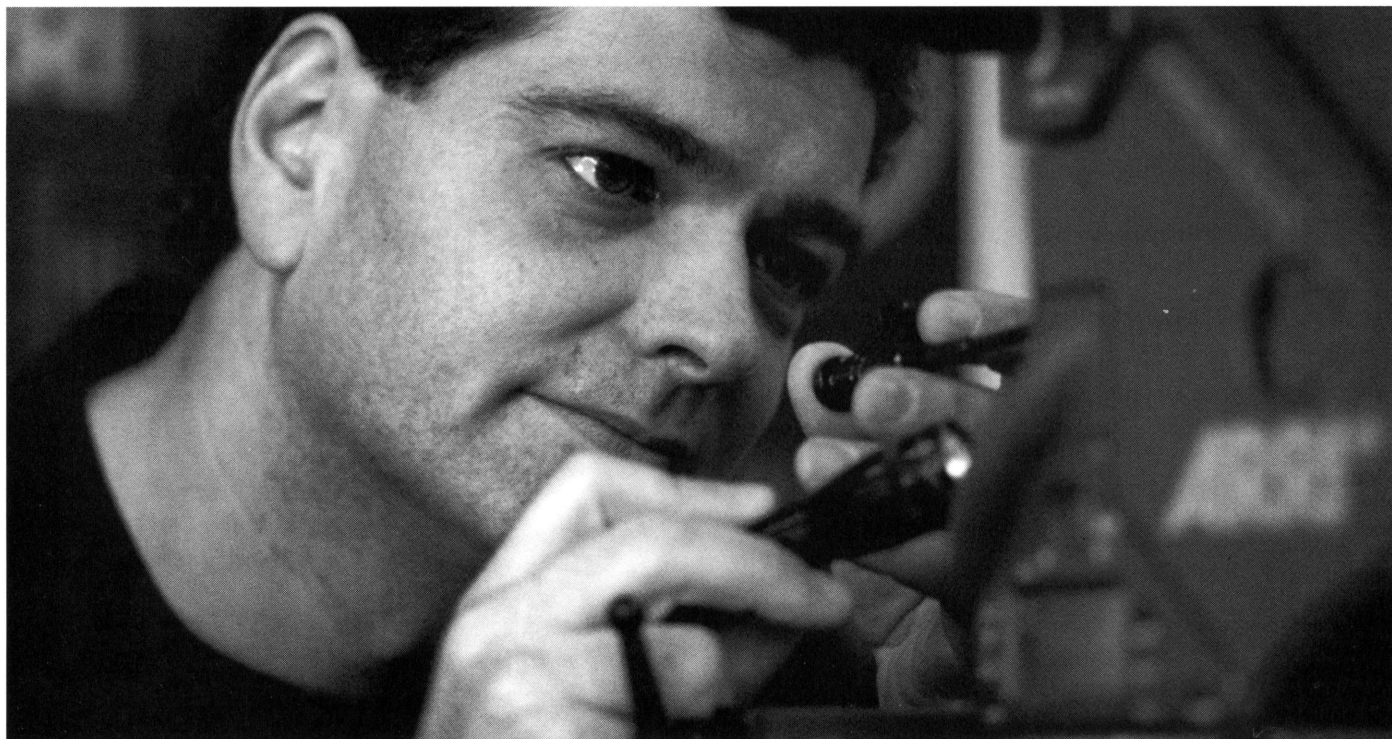
The filmmakers later used undercranked cameras to capture two "superspeed" car chases — one involving the crime kingpin, Mr. Eddy, and a climactic scene in which Fred Madison is tracked across the desert by a fleet of police cars. "For the first chase, we shot all

of the stuff with the actors during the show, and then went back on the last day of shooting to get the second-unit footage. We tried a bunch of different speeds — from 20 fps down to six and even four. I didn't want Mary Sweeney to have to go in later, dupe everything and speed it up, because David and I both like to stay away from opticals whenever possible. In fact, most of the film's dissolves and fades are A/B roll and not opticals. It's hard to get people to do that these days, but David appreciates the quality of it, which is really nice for me.

"We did the final chase sequence three times, with two cameras outfitted with different lenses and running at slightly different frame rates — 24 and 12 fps. In this case, some of the footage was sped up and blown up in post, and I think Mary and David also double- and triple-printed parts of it to make the tone more aggressive. While we were shooting that chase, we put Fred's car on a process trailer being towed by a tractor-trailer generator. We had the usual lighting inside the car, which wasn't much — probably Kino Flos. We also set up two carbon-arc lightning machines on scissor arcs, two 4K Xenons aimed into Mylar, two strobes, and a couple of smaller lighting units, like Pars dimming up and down. All of this stuff was working while we were driving down the road at night in the middle of the desert. From a mile away it must have been quite a sight!"

Lynch understands full well that the visceral and often oblique visions presented in *Lost Highway* may frustrate and even antagonize audiences, but he has often said that he prefers his pictures to remain open to many interpretations. "Stories have tangents; they open up and become different things," the director maintains. "You can still have a structure, but you should leave room to dream. If you stay true to your ideas, filmmaking becomes an inside-out, honest kind of process. And if it's an honest thing for you, there's a chance that people will feel that, even if it's abstract." ◆

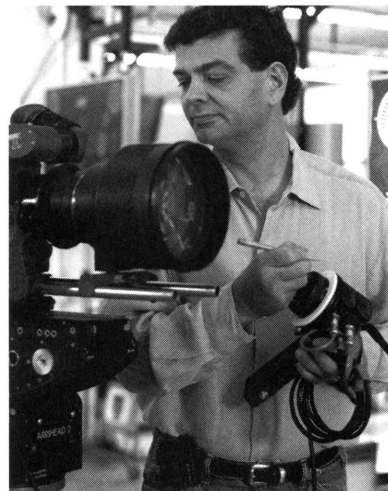
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Suburban Blight

Director Richard Linklater and cinematographer Lee Daniel continue their collaboration with a dark look at *subUrbia*.

by Chris Pizzello

To young people who have spent their formative years within the tranquil, non-threatening confines of the suburbs, the prospect of leaving can be daunting and even traumatic. Having the courage to make the leap often means the difference between a life of fulfilled potential and one of tragic stagnation. The twenty-something protagonists of *subUrbia* are all facing this crucial stage of self-definition, a time when nagging ambitions clash with paralyzing fears.

Directed by Richard Linklater and based on actor/writer Eric Bogosian's play of the same name, the film focuses on Jeff (Giovanni Ribisi), a bored, disaffected part-time community college student, and his group of friends, who get together one night to welcome back their old pal Pony (Jayce Bartok), whose rock band has just enjoyed a successful national tour. The arrival of the musician's limousine in the convenience store parking lot where the group hangs out precipitates a night of drinking, sex and soul-searching.

subUrbia seems like a natural continuation of the themes presented in Linklater's previous feature films — *Slacker* (1991), *Dazed and Confused* (1993) and *Before Sunrise* (1995) — all of which used the framing device of a single day or night to examine characters straddling the bridge between youth and adulthood. Yet this film also marks the first time Linklater

has worked with material penned by someone else.

"*subUrbia* felt like something I could have written," says Linklater. "After I saw the play, I never quite stopped thinking about it. For the first time, I found myself in someone else's story. I was most pointedly like the main character Jeff when I was 20, but the others were characters I've also either

that direction."

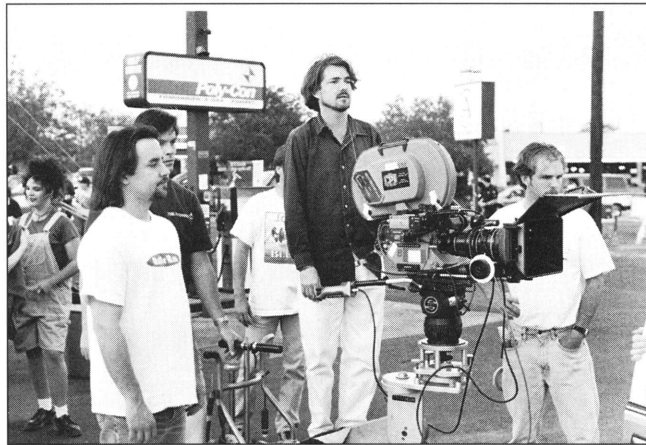
Linklater's longtime cinematographer, Lee Daniel, was initially leery of creative repetition, since the film's nocturnal backdrop and suburban milieu echoed aspects of Linklater's previous pictures. "I was a little disappointed after I first read the script," Daniel admits. "I said to Rick, 'Haven't we done this before?' But he reminded

me that I hadn't seen the play and that he wanted to do the play one better by making it cinematic. So I gave that to him. But it didn't actually come alive in my mind until I saw the rehearsals and spent time on the actual location."

His trust in Linklater's filmmaking instincts is grounded in years of friendship and collaboration. The two first met in the mid-

Eighties when Daniel, a University of Texas-Austin film student, encountered Houston native Linklater at a meeting of the Heart of Texas Filmmakers club, a group that was particularly enthusiastic about the Super 8 format.

"Rick told me that he made Super 8 films with sound, which I'd never done before, so I asked to see them," recalls Daniel. "We went to his apartment, and he showed me these films that he'd never shown to anybody. They were really well-done. He'd learned how to splice with Super 8 sound, which was very meticulous work. I would never have had the patience for it! I really developed some respect for him



been or come to know. I could definitely relate to all of them."

While the languid, patient pace of the film bears Linklater's distinctive stamp, the more explosive tone of the piece points to a new direction for the filmmaker. "In *subUrbia*, the challenge was handling material that was definitely more confrontational and inherently more dramatic," Linklater says. "In the past, I've tended to diffuse the drama in a story and not make it such a big deal. The characters have been more internal, while in this film they're more external — raising their voices, being more argumentative. I think collaborating with Eric Bogosian really pushed me in

Director Richard Linklater (in T-shirt) reteams with cameraman Lee Daniel (behind Moviecam Compact) on *subUrbia*, the duo's fourth collaboration.



Nazeer (Ajay Naidu), the Pakistani proprietor of local slacker haunt The A Food Mart, is confronted by the buffoonish Buff, (Steve Zahn), who's cheered on by Bee-Bee (Dina Spybey), Sooze (Amie Carey), Tim (Nicky Katt) and Jeff (Giovanni Ribisi).

after that day."

The two filmmakers discovered that they were both looking for a place to live, so they decided to pool their resources and move in together at late rock legend Janis Joplin's old house in Austin. "That's where I really started to learn about filmmaking," Daniel says. "Rick taught me a lot about narrative, which I had never really been that interested in. My interests had been in documentary and experimental filmmaking."

Daniel and Linklater were roommates for five years, during which time their residence became known as the "Film House." "We talked incessantly about filmmaking," the cameraman says. "It was pretty much the only topic. We founded the Austin Film Society in 1986 for the explicit purpose of getting ahold of classic and obscure films from around the world, so we could watch them."

While Daniel worked steadily in the commercial world as a camera assistant, Linklater made his first full-length Super 8 film, *It's Impossible to Learn to Plow by Reading Books*, in 1989. Spurred on by the money Daniel was earning on his commercial shoots, the two be-

gan work on the experimental narrative of *Slacker*. The highly original film followed over 100 intermingling characters (almost none of them played by professional actors) through the streets of Austin in the span of 24 hours.

"I was making pretty good money at the time, so we had the resources," recalls Daniel. "I bought an old Arri SR that we shot the film with, and a Steenbeck. Meanwhile, we were paying \$130 a month in rent, so we had really low overhead. Our house served as our production center. We had all of our story meetings and rehearsals there, as well as our syncing sessions for the dailies. Rick, through means I'm still not clear on, somehow got 60 or 70 rolls of 16mm Kodak film from some dubious source. I came home after work one day hoping to find a beer in the refrigerator, and there was all this film inside. I said to myself, 'Where the hell did this come from?'"

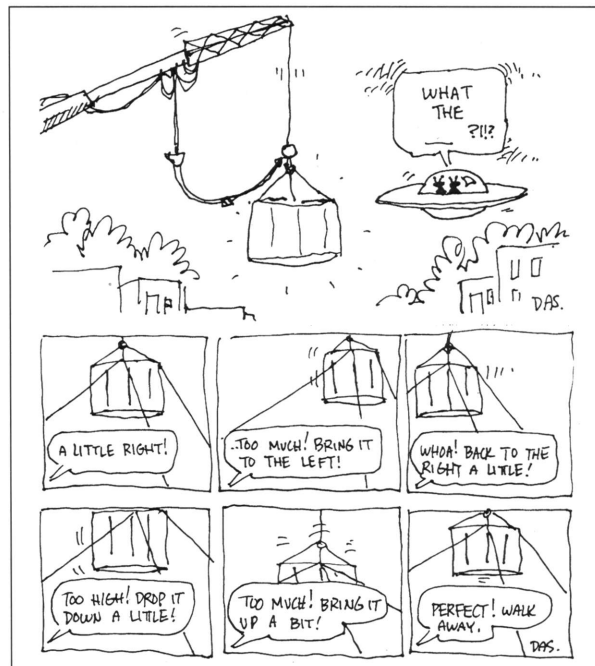
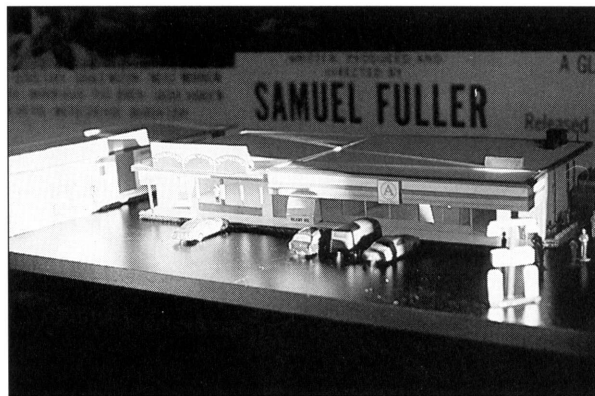
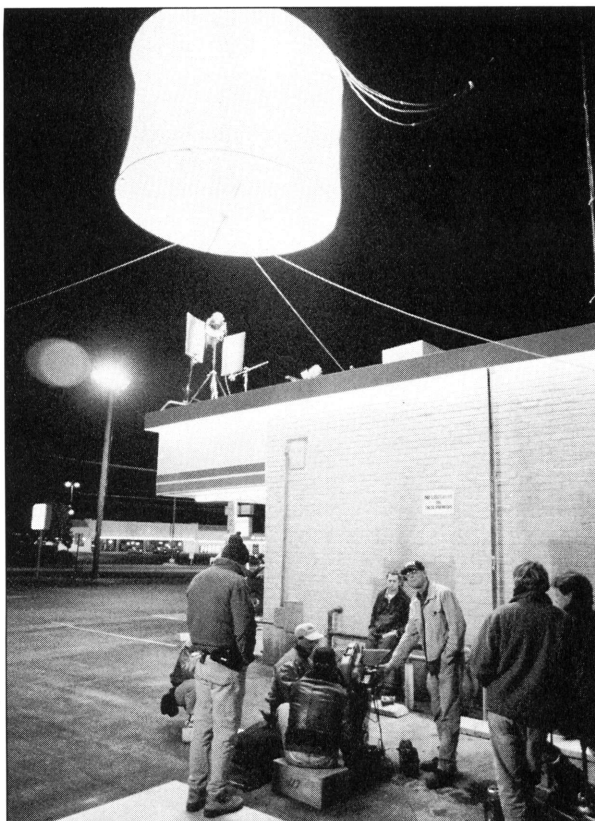
Orion Classics eventually acquired the \$23,000 *Slacker* for release. The resultant critical acclaim put Linklater on the map, and made the film's title a zeitgeist-defining buzzword for a young and labor-wary generation. "Most of

my movies are about hanging out," the director admits with a laugh. "There's a certain atmosphere of boredom. How do you make a film about boredom and not be boring? That's always been the challenge. In *Slacker*, there's really no story and no main character. Yet it's watchable because there's a consistency that carries through it. Audiences adapt to the rules you set up, as long as you don't throw them any curveballs."

Linklater's next film, *Dazed and Confused*, presented a hilarious and hallucinatory look at drug-fueled Texas teenagers on the last day of school in 1976. The film was made for Universal with a substantially bigger budget of over six million dollars, which put Linklater and the production under the sometimes uncomfortable magnifying glass of the Hollywood studio system.

"We felt that a lot of people from Hollywood were going to come out and tell us how to do it, even though we already knew how to do it ourselves while still appeasing the money people," cinematographer Daniel reflects. "It was really tough, but ultimately we came in on time and under bud-

Right: The crew sets up an exterior shot under the soft glow of "the Orb," a giant movable China ball filled with 20 independently-operated 1K nook lights diffused with white parachute material. Upper right: A desktop model of the gas station/convenience store constructed by production designer Catherine Harwicke to help Linklater conceptualize his shot list. Below: A cartoon by boom operator David Smith illustrates the proper way to operate "the Orb." Opposite page: A drunken Buff cavorts with a new friend he met while partying inside Pony's limousine.



get, and succeeded in making a somewhat subversive work. In effect, it's a Hollywood B-movie, but there's nothing wrong with that."

The key to Linklater's sly visual strategy for *Dazed and Confused* was resisting the temptation to exploit the gimmick value inherent in the oft-lampooned 1970s era. "The idea was not to underscore the Seventies too much," he comments. "There were no close-ups of platform shoes. I told every department head on the movie, 'It's May 28, 1976, we've dropped the camera down on this night and we're just going to shoot what we see.' We didn't use a Steadicam because people weren't using a Steadicam back then. I really wanted to make it look as if it had been shot in 1976. If we could have found the Eastman stock that was most popular in 1976, I would have used it!"

Daniel further honed his skills in night photography on Linklater's next film, *Before Sunrise*, which followed a young couple (Ethan Hawke and Julie Delpy) around the streets of Vienna over an evening as they met, fell in love and said goodbye.

"Before Sunrise was really down and dirty [photographically]," Daniel notes. "Often we just used existing light at night — something I was scared to do at first. We used Eastman Kodak's 500 ASA 98 film, which was fairly new at that point. A lot of times I shot in areas that had only two footcandles of light. For a park scene in which Ethan and Julie were rolling around on the grass at night, the only light I used was a 6K way off in the distance through some trees. It was the kind of scene that was really intimate for the characters, so it was nice not to have a lot of light pounding in their eyes."

"With the high-speed stocks and super-fast lenses that are available nowadays, you can shoot in two footcandles of light," he stresses. "It's ingrained as a habit in Hollywood to use more and more lights [for night scenes], and I think it goes back to the whole infrastructure of how those kinds of movies are made, with big

crews and unions, and a lot of equipment that you have to justify spending money on. We've come out of the independent world, and I think studios are saying, 'Hey, these guys work cheap. Let's see what they can do.'"

For *subUrbia*, Daniel had a chance to use what he had learned on *Dazed and Confused* and *Before Sunrise*, since the new film is the third successive Linklater effort to take place primarily at night. But the simple, natural lighting approach Daniel favors also springs from his longtime admiration for European cinematographers such as Sven Nykvist, ASC (*Persona*), Henri Alekan (*Anna Karenina*), Raoul Coutard (*Breathless*) and Gabriel Figueroa (*The Night of the Iguana*).

"I guess my philosophy is 'Don't light unless you need to,'"

he explains. "Most of the time, all you need to do is take the light that's there naturally and just augment it. When Sven Nykvist was shooting *What's Eating Gilbert Grape* out here in Texas, I interviewed him for an article in a local paper. He used three lights on *The Ox* and it looks wonderful. Leave it dark where it should be dark. That's what looks more real anyway. So many night scenes in Hollywood films are overlit."

Linklater concurs. "I really hate when a 12K is pumping right off camera, lighting a whole neighborhood. Lee has a soft, European feel with lighting. We share a certain aesthetic, a sort of anti-slick realism. On *subUrbia*, our goal was to make the movie look like it really would to your eye at night. We also had to shoot the whole movie in 22 days, so we needed to come up with a general lighting plan that could be set up really quickly."

Most of *subUrbia*'s action is anchored around the drab convenience store where the characters while away the night hours, a potentially stagnant scenario that tested Linklater's visual resourcefulness. "In all of my other movies, there have been a lot of locations and the characters have kept moving," he points out. "Those movies were all about movement, while this one has a static quality. You're in one place for a long time. You have to keep it varied and moving and not boring, so that it doesn't *feel* like one location. So it was a particular challenge to dig into that space and make it work cinematically."

Production designer Catherine Harwicke (*Tape Heads*, *Tombstone*, *Tank Girl*) set about reconfiguring an empty Austin mini-mall into a realistic all-night gas station/convenience store. A desktop model was constructed to help Linklater visualize his shot list before heading out to the location. "I could work out all of the shots around the store, then meet with

the assistant director, the script supervisor, and Lee, and go through all of our night shooting," Linklater explains. "You could walk through a whole scene using these tiny plastic people and cars. It was almost like a James Cameron movie!"

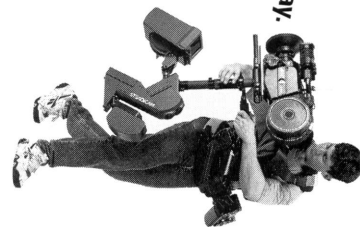
In order to facilitate the long nights of shooting an ensemble cast outside the store, Daniel employed an imposing but soft lighting instrument that was soon tagged "the Orb" for its otherworldly appearance. "I thought an overhead source from above would let us move really fast," he says. "We were running



two Moviecam Compacts for each scene, and [uniform lighting] would allow us to shoot easily from two different angles at once. The source was basically a huge China ball that we could move from the arm of a 110-foot crane over the convenience store. It consisted of 20 1K nook lights, which we could turn on and off independently. We put them inside white parachute material for diffusion. The whole thing looked like a giant yo-yo on its side! We used it as our main light on the actors for the entire three weeks of filming.

"We filled out the light from the Orb with Kino Flos. We also wanted to be able to see 360 degrees around the parking lot, so we attached three 1Ks, each on top of fake 30' telephone poles that we had placed next to the street. We would use those when we wanted a hard backlight that seemed a little more typical coming from a street."

Daniel used Optima 32 fluorescent tubes to illuminate the inside of the convenience store. An old strip center across the street from the convenience store was



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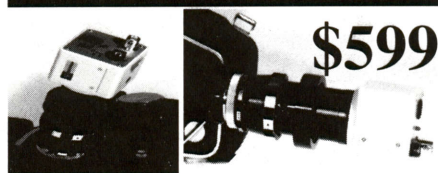
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Jeff consoles distraught alcoholic Bee-Bee against a shadowy backdrop.

also refurbished to create point sources of light in the dark background and to offset the straight white light hitting the actors from the Orb.

"The whole idea of the production design was to pretend that it was 1998," Daniel explains. "We wanted things to look contemporary but timeless. We had an existing red neon 'Future Firm Fitness Center' sign and about 150 yards of over 400 Chroma 50 fluorescent fixtures in eight-foot banks across the street. They were straight Chroma 50s, so they gave off a blue cast. We just wired them up underneath the overhang of the strip center. We went for any type of electrical source we could tap into."

As a final touch at the strip center, the cinematographer placed two 1000-watt mercury-vapor lights atop each of three existing parking-lot poles nearby. "In this part of the country, strip centers are using mercury-vapor lights that have a really super-blue cast," Daniel says. "We lit the actors with straight white light pretty much all the time, so we put a blue cast on all of the buildings in the background. It was an important part of the production design that Catherine and I had discussed beforehand."

Despite the great pains taken to create a sense of depth around the convenience store,

Daniel still faced more than a few lengthy scenes in which Jeff and his buddies traded dialogue against a stark brick wall on one side of the convenience store. "I knew those scenes would be a challenge photographically," he says. "There wasn't anything visually interest in that area besides some old graffiti. I thought, 'The audience is going to drop dead if you just lock off the camera and let three or four people talk for seven or eight pages of dialogue.'"

To solve the problem, Daniel came up with the idea of introducing movement in the frame through the illusion of car activity. "We set up a system of 'headlight gags,'" he reveals. "In the natural world, you see car reflections all the time. The funny thing was, we started to develop a whole new nomenclature as we went along. The gags became such a habit every night that the gaffer, electricians and I had fun coming up with a new terminology to describe each specific one. Most of them were named after food items.

"For instance, if you took a double header with two 1Ks on it and just panned it across the scene to simulate headlights, that would be a 'pound cake.' When you brought the effect into the scene and then turned and went out the same way you had come in, it was termed a 'tuna sandwich.' And if you brought your 'pound cake' through the scene and then dimmed it down as if the car was fading off in the distance, that



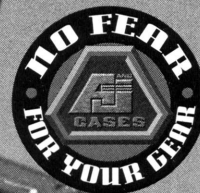
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GET LOWER

would be a 'bag of chips.' You could have a 'tuna sandwich' with a 'bag of chips.' We had at least half a dozen different gags."

Daniel pushed the 200 ASA 5287 film one stop to 400 for most of the filming. "The big difference between *subUrbia* and *Before Sunrise* was that we had an ensemble cast for this film," Daniel explains. "We needed more depth of field so that as many of the actors as possible would be in focus. I pumped up the light level so that I could work at about an f2.8 stop. Pushing the film also bumped up the saturation and contrast, which is what we were looking for anyway. *subUrbia* is a street picture, so we wanted that contrasty, gritty feel. The Zeiss Superspeed lenses we used also tend to be inherently pretty contrasty, so they're nice for getting really good blacks."

Daniel found that he had to switch to 500 ASA 5298 film for darker scenes set away from the convenience store. For an extended Steadicam shot tracking the characters as they wandered aimlessly down an Austin street, the cinematographer reverted to a simple but resourceful fill method he had first used on *Before Sunrise*.

"We had one 6K up on a Condor lighting the actors, and a 12K on another Condor for the backlight," he recalls. "But we also handheld a 2' by 4' Kino Flo over the Steadicam to fill in the actors' eyes, similar to what we had done on *Before Sunrise*. In that movie, the couple walked through many different pools of light in the streets of Vienna. There were halogens, fluorescents, mercury-vapors, sodium-vapors, and standard incandescents. It was of the utmost importance to keep Julie and Ethan's skin tones consistent, so we used a very lightweight lightbox of mini Kino Flos around the mattebox to put a little frontal light on them."

Complicating matters further in *subUrbia* were the vastly different skin tones of lead actor Giovanni Ribisi and Amie Carey, who plays the part of Jeff's girlfriend. "Giovanni is really pale, while Amie is part Native American," Daniel explains. "She has naturally dark skin, so for scenes

involving both of them, I would often have to put a single and a double net over his light, not hers, so that the light would even out."

As with nearly every location shoot, the filmmakers were sometimes at the mercy of the elements during their speedy 22-day shooting schedule. In a crucial scene filmed over two nights in a deserted alley where Jeff bonds with the troubled Bee Bee (Dina Spyvey), Daniel used a 12K gelled CTO through some trees to make an eerie shadow of branches against the wall behind the actors. "Unfortunately, one night was really windy and the other just wasn't," he explains. "During that scene, sometimes you see the shadows of the leaves against the wall, and sometimes you don't. I liked the effect, but I wish it could have been more consistent."

Linklater and Daniel initially considered shooting the entire film with a handheld camera, but eventually decided that judicious camera movement to highlight important moments in the story would be more effective. For

one scene, in which Jeff peers curiously at a deserted van that he believes to be the site of a murder, Linklater jogged his encyclopedic movie memory to come up with an eerie visual hook.

"We used a handheld camera on a dolly that was moving very slowly," he discloses. "I call it the old *Friday the 13th* shot, a P.O.V. inching in on the van from Jeff's eyes. I liked the creepy quality of that shot. I'm always telling the dolly operator, 'That speed you just went there? Half as much.' If you go too fast, it works as a sort of psychological exclamation point, which Martin Scorsese does really effectively. But with the pace of this film and the type of characters we were dealing with, a faster move wouldn't have been appropriate. The characters were coming to gradual realizations in this film, so the camera movements had to be slower. I don't like camera movement that draws attention to itself. I think it would feel intrusive and out of whack in my films."

Similarly, the director prefers focal lengths that approximate

what the human eye naturally sees. "That's the sort of thing Lee and I always argue about," he laughs. "He naturally wants to be on longer lenses, but I consider a 50mm to be a long lens! I really like wide lenses. I think they're closer to the way I view the world, and I like seeing how characters inhabit the space around them. This film also has a lot of characters in the frame at once, so we shot most of the movie with two lenses, the 25mm and the 35mm."

subUrbia begins on a note of wicked irony, as the camera pans over acres of soulless suburban architecture to the bathetic strains of Gene Pitney's "Town Without Pity." "We didn't have to spend too much time looking for really ugly locations and tract houses," Daniel notes wryly. "Austin is in the midst of a major boom, with all kinds of construction going on and something like 100 people a day moving here. The second unit went and shot a lot of those areas, and then Rick and I found some ourselves." ♦

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Film frame courtesy of Cathartic Filmworks.

Straight Out of Beantown

Director Robert Patton-Spruill and cinematographer Richard Moos cruise the crazed streets of Boston's Field's Corner in *Squeeze*.

by Andrew O. Thompson

The three teenage principals of Squeeze, Hector (Eddie Cutanda), Bao (Phuong Duong) and Tyson (Tyrone Burton) bid each other a rainy farewell early on in the film. All three were students of director Patton-Spruill's acting workshop at the Boston-based gang-prevention center, the Dorchester Youth Center, and are now fully registered with the Screen Actor's Guild.

"I want everyone to imagine what it's really like mentally to deal with the streets," says director Robert Patton-Spruill of his first feature, *Squeeze*, a hard-hitting urban drama dealing with three adolescents. "Forget the life and death issue. What about life and the after-life? I don't mean dying and going to heaven; I'm talking about what happens after the trauma. I'm tired of watching the news and hearing about the 'inner city' problem, because no one is really thinking."

The Boston-bred Patton-Spruill faced many real-life dramas during the three years he spent as an counselor/acting coach at the Dorchester Youth Collaborative (DYC), a gang prevention center in Field's Corner, an impoverished Boston neighborhood racked by the double threat of crack cocaine and gang violence. The director first encountered the DYC in 1993 while working as a casting agent for the WGBH series *The House*. Patton-Spruill has been a volunteer

there ever since, and helped establish its actor's workshop, Extreme Close-Up. The group's teenage thespians have acquired SAG and AFTRA credentials by acting in public service announcements that he has directed.

It was a tense incident at the DYC that inspired the title of Patton-Spruill's new film. He recalls, "Some real gangsters came into the youth center looking for certain people, and they were really intimidating. Even though I was the oldest person there, I didn't know what to do. After they had left, I asked one of the kids, 'How did that make you feel?' He said, 'It made me feel squeezed!' That's how it felt to me too, as a 24-year-old standing between an 18- and 12-year-old. I never forgot the feeling."

Much of *Squeeze's* screenplay is derived from actual experiences of Patton-Spruill and the film's associate producer, Emmet Folger, who co-founded the DYC 19 years ago. The film's authentic atmosphere is amplified by Max Cutler's hyper-real production design, which is viewed from fluid, fly-on-the-wall perspectives.

The story concerns a trio of wayward teenagers — the African-American Tyson (Tyrone Burton), Vietnamese Bao (Phuong Duong) and Puerto Rican Hector (Eddie Cutanda) — who idle away their time at a gas station, begging customers for change. When local hood Tommy (Russell G. Jones) begins harassing the three, the so-called "PG-13" crew begin pushing crack cocaine for rival gangster Derek (Beresford Bennett) in return for street protection.

The three youths find a true helping hand in the form of sincere youth worker J.J. (Geoffrey Rhue), but even his intervention can't keep them out of trouble. Soon, the pressures of earning quick loot and street credibility become too arduous for Tyson. After witnessing a cold-blooded shooting, Tyson succumbs to a form of post-traumatic stress syndrome, a psychological disorder common among shell-shocked war veterans.

The actors portraying the protagonists of *Squeeze* are all SAG-

registered and hail from the NYC. All three have backgrounds similar to that of the characters they portray: Cutanda and Duong were formerly gang members, while Burton was jacking cars and selling drugs at age 12. At the time of filming, Patton-Spruill had trained the trio for three months; they lived at his house throughout the entire shoot, as well as for the four previous months.

Despite the rough upbringing of his three leads, the director sought to lend the film a somewhat positive spin. While scripting *Squeeze*, he made a conscious decision to counteract the conventions of the "new jack" genre of black cinema. "I thought that I could make a movie which would truly say that the genre was over by turning it upside down: the best friend doesn't die; the word 'nigger' appears in the movie only six times; and the character of the youth worker provides some sort of hope."

Squeeze had its world premiere screening last April at the Los Angeles Independent Film Festival, where Miramax Films acquired worldwide rights to the picture. According to Patton-Spruill, the film is slated to be the debut release of Miramax's urban films division, Flava Films. The upcoming New England Film and Video Festival plans to honor *Squeeze* with awards for Best Picture and Best Cinematography.

Patton-Spruill first made the acquaintance of his director of photography/editor, Richard Moos, while working as a casting agent at Collinge-Pickman. Moos, then a student at the Massachusetts College of Art, had sent a package for his first short film, *Endocrine Secrets*, to the agency — without success. However, Patton-Spruill had overheard Moos' script being read by his superiors, and later fished the rejected screenplay out of the garbage. He loved the story so much that he called up Moos

and agreed to clandestinely cast the short.

After a year of working in New York casting and writing scripts, Patton-Spruill joined forces with Moos' company, Cathartic Filmworks, and worked on several shorts for the production company. Moos then served as cinematographer on the short films Patton-Spruill directed while the latter was enrolled in Boston University's graduate film school. Two of the duo's collaborations, *Interior Monologue* (a documentary about a Mexican stripper) and *The Gaming Table* (Amiri Baraka's *Dutchman* transposed in a rave bar) tied for first place at B.U.'s Sumner Redstone Awards in 1993.

Describing the pair's cinematic style, Moos offers, "We're

really products of our time. I went to an art school where the concentration was mainly the Sixties avant-garde movement. Rob came out of Mel Howard's instruction in classic film structure at B.U., so at the time he was really into the French New Wave. We had slightly different educations, but overall I think we were both influenced by the same directors: Scorsese, Coppola, Lucas and Spielberg, who through our schooling we realized were influenced by Kurosawa, Godard and Truffaut."

"By the time we shot *Squeeze*, we had developed a system of communication that really precluded any need to sit down and refer [to any films or paintings]. We talked about the scenes in terms of concepts, feelings and movement. We didn't just say that we wanted something to be like a scene in *GoodFellas*. The only film that we did reference was *The 400 Blows*, for a scene in which Tyson runs [after he's witnessed Tommy's murder at the hands of rival gang leader Derek]."

The first portion of the *Squeeze* was shot in six days (over three weekends) in November of 1994. With startup funds of \$35,000 in personal funds and credit-card charges, the director and crew shot the first 25 pages of the script. Af-

Center: Patton-Spruill (holding cup of coffee) observes cinematographer Richard Moos as he sets a lens on the Arriflex 35-III camera being manned by Steadicam operator Chuck Papert. Below: The silhouetted "PG-13 crew" make their way down the fictional Lime Street to hawk rocks of crack cocaine. Moos says that the deep emerald shading is meant to metaphorically infer "drugs, greed, money and crime."



Photos by Lisa Kessler and Stella Johnson.

Right: Patton-Spruill preps actors Burton and Cutanda for an overhead shot of them sleeping in a dilapidated chapel, a scene filmed in an abandoned half-way house. Moos utilized a Piccolo platform underneath which he slung the Arriflex BL 4 camera. He notes, "I had to operate off of a monitor and jerry-rig a grip arm onto the pan handles so that I could [operate] from the position of the camera's eye." Opposite: Patton-Spruill watches a rehearsal of Tyson and Hector's meeting with drug dealer Derek (Beresford Bennett). The den's kaleidoscopic palette is actually an inside reference to the director's 1993 short *The Gaming Table*, which transposed the Amiri Baraka play *Dutchman* into the environs of a rave bar.



ter cutting a trailer from the footage, the filmmakers managed to raise an additional \$70,000 to continue the shoot, which took place over six weeks, from mid-March to May '95. A private investor then provided \$50,000 to help complete the project and to pay the 35 crew members, who were receiving half-scale rates.

Remarks Moos, "We paid the crew half their rate with a guarantee that they would get their money if we sold the film. There was always the concern that it might never sell and nobody would ever see a dime, but the crew knew that going into the shoot. Still, we made the commitment to pay them what little cash money we had as a gesture of good faith. In turn, they really went to bat to get the film done. For instance, the money that we didn't pay the rental houses went to the crew, and the rental houses knew that."

Moos says that Cathartic Filmworks' long-standing relationship with the Boston film community, the positive nature of the DYC-affiliated project, and the efforts of producers Garen Topalian, Stephanie Danan and Patricia

Moreno (Patton-Spruill's wife) were instrumental in completing *Squeeze* for a grand total of \$400,000 (including post fees and other expenses). Explains the cinematographer, "We basically struck a deferral deal with the rental houses, which was unprecedented because they typically don't do deferrals. They will do incredible deals, but for an indie shoot this was a long project. This deal was their investment in us. They knew our past work and knew what we could do with nothing. They wound up deferring a lot of their rate, and really worked to get us the equipment we needed. A couple of 12Ks and 6Ks, some 4Ks, and a bunch of Pars is a big HMI package for an indie film."

Moos shot *Squeeze* in 35mm with an Arriflex BL4, working entirely with recans and short ends obtained from the L.A.-based Dr. Raw Stock — Kodak's 5248 for all interiors and day exteriors, and 5298 for night interiors. Though Moos manned his own camera, he utilized the skills of operator Chuck Papert for the film's many Steadicam scenes. The cinematographer notes, "The overall concept was that when the kids were

around the drugs, the dealers and life on the street, the camera should always be moving so that the [viewer's] frame of reference would always be changing. The audience isn't grounded anywhere until the stabilizing factor — the youth worker — comes into the story.

"The first scene [of the film] at the gas station starts out with a huge Steadicam master — it's sweeping and moving in and out and around. Then J.J. pulls up and the frame locks down. Anytime the kids are out by themselves or with the bad element, there's a lot of frenetic movement; anytime the three are in the youth center environment, things slow down, and you get a better grasp of where they are.

"The one exception [to this pattern] would be scenes on Lime Street, when the kids are dealing drugs by themselves," continues the cameraman. "The idea there was that we were trying to simulate what really happens in that situation, which is not a lot. It's just them sitting and waiting. To downplay the drama, the Lime Street scenes were shot in a static style from one angle, with the char-

acters flat against the background.

The film's palette was also sectioned to reflect the respective aspects of the trio's topsy-turvy existence. Green, says Moos, denotes "drugs, greed, money and crime." Thus, Lime Street is perpetually awash in an emerald hue. Neutral light, as well as warm and golden hues, connotes the calm of such nurturing environments as the youth center and Tyson's home. The major deviations from this rule were the lairs of Tommy and Derek, the film's rival dope dealers. After endless taunting from Tommy and his crew, the three teens pay a visit to the kaleidoscopic, nightclub-like headquarters of gang-banger Derek. Describing the surreal setting, Moos explains, "Rob wanted to [exploit] the auteur theory in referencing himself, so the color scheme in Derek's pad is very similar to the club atmosphere of *The Gaming Table*. That's where we spent the most on art. Colorwise, it was [gelled with] very bold primary colors — red, green, and blue — that we just mixed in. We also threw in some fluorescents and some tungstens, so basically we had all the colors of the rainbow kicking around in this place.

"I had a bunch of shop lights — two-tube fluorescent banks — that you actually see in frame lining the walls, and the rest of it is tungsten: a lot of 1Ks and Leikos, picking up things here and there. There was a 2K casting a blue wash over the DJ booth in the scene, and then a couple of little

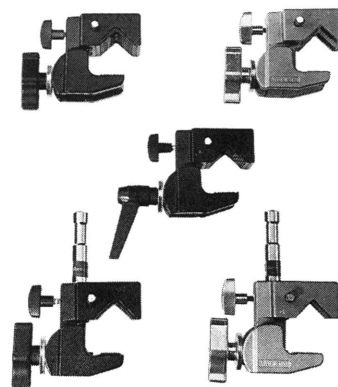
units to bring things out — probably a dozen 1Ks, four 2Ks, and some inkies."

After kidnapping Tyson from his Lime Street perch, Tommy and his goons take the youth to an abandoned warehouse, where he is beaten, tormented with a lit cigarette, and finally tortured by a youth (played by the actor's actual brother) with a tazer gun. When shooting this scene from Tyson's perspective, Moos employed Dutch angles, and distorted the footage in-camera with a Mesmerizer (a lens attachment that creates a warping effect when spun). "All around the perimeter, where Tyson is pulled in [by Tommy's goons], I had HMI fixtures gelled with a primary green. To separate Tommy's basement from Lime Street, or any other place where there was some green, we added a sick-looking yellow achieved with a Canary yellow gel. We came up with a yellow motivated by the space, which had these China hats [a light with a fixture protruding from an inverted funnel] hanging down. We just notched up the color to make things more surreal; we kept the warm theme, but made the light sick and scary.

"As Tyson comes up to the torture area, we placed some 2Ks up on the support beams to create little pools of light. We used a 2K to give us a primary pool, and then we swapped out the lights in the China hats for 100-watt yellow bug lights — six in the background. Then we hung a bunch of shop lights, and put

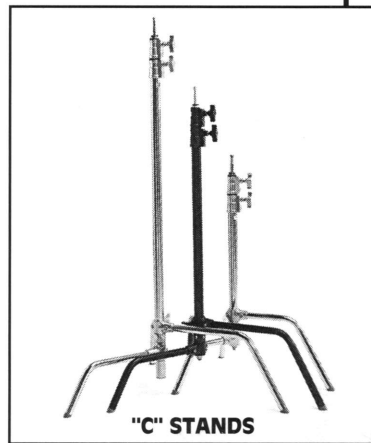


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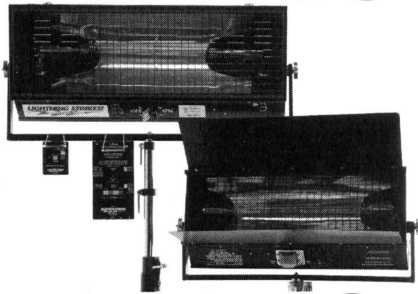
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up a couple of extra banks of fluorescents [purchased at Home Depot] that played off the green.

"Basically, we had three color temperatures going on, but it was primarily green and yellow. There were some lights on the wall that were just hitting the background with straight balanced light. If I'm doing something really weird, I usually put a neutral reference somewhere in the frame. When I shoot tungsten film, there will be a straight tungsten reference somewhere in the scene."

The location that served as the homes of both Tyson and Hector was a vacant two-bedroom apartment in Roxbury rented from Patton-Spruill's aunt, the owner of the building. This small site (12' x 15') became known as "the jinxed location" because of the mishaps that occurred while the filmmakers were shooting an overhead boom shot of the suicide of Hector's HIV-positive, drug-addicted mother.

The woman playing the despondent junkie was a dispatcher from the Boston fire department who had spent many years as a nun in Spain. But the impromptu actress's ethical and physical uneasiness with the requirements of the role [i.e. the blood-filled prosthetic strapped to her chest] were the least of the production's problems. Making the situation even more stressful was that the 35-person crew was packed into the pad like sardines in a can. Recalls Moos, "The whole scene is dark — you can't see anything except for Tyson; his mother is just a silhouetted figure until she shoots herself, and then the whole place lights up for that split-second. We had a brand new DeSisti 6K with a lightning effect device in front of it, and it was boxed in. Because of the heat, the box cracked the lens, but we ended up getting the shot.

"We had to do the blood effect with a big jib arm that hovered over her and then floated up — she is supposedly floating away with the blood. I had a superwide lens on the camera, so everybody had to be outside a certain perimeter. And because we were in this tiny place, the lens had to be right

on top of her; the camera was literally two inches away. Sitting on the jib arm [with mag and other accessories attached], the BL is an 85-pound camera.

"The AC had a super long [follow-focus] whip that was safetied off to her wrist by a sash. In rehearsing the move, for which we only had one take, the focus whip slipped and cracked the actress on the head! The whole crew gasped, but she was a real trooper and just hung in there."

While shooting the scene, Moos and Patton-Spruill sought to create the kind of darkness that Gordon Willis, ASC had used to great effect in *The Godfather II*, as detailed in the documentary *Visions of Light*. In the end, however, Moos found that the suicide scene suffered from a murkiness that resulted from too deep a darkness and untested optical effects. He explains, "The scene was about four-and-a-half stops under, so we were scraping the bottom end of the film stock's latitude. Conceptually, it works, but if I had to do it over again I would bring up the fill level. When we were there, we said, 'Let's experiment.' Sometimes you win and sometimes you don't. [During timing] I pulled up the contrast level, but that's always a tradeoff because the blacks start to go to mud."

Having added *Squeeze* as the first full-fledged feature on their respective resumés, both Patton-Spruill and Moos are currently working on separate projects. The former is editing his sophomore feature, *Body Count*, an art-heist road film for Island Pictures. Cinematographer Moos, meanwhile, is prepping his directorial debut, *The High Holidays*, which recounts an impromptu Christmas Day conflict between Italian, Russian and African-American gangsters in New York City. ♦



PEACE OF MIND.

Photo of Stephen Katz by Michael Bulbenko.

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Marcello (Jean Reno) strikes a pensive pose in the graveyard. As the film takes place in a nonspecific time frame, only the dates seen on tombstones offer a clue as to the film's period.

In the charming comedy *Roseanna's Grave*, warm-hearted trattoria owner Marcello (Jean Reno) is faced with a heart-wrenching problem: the last wish of his terminally ill wife, Roseanna (Mercedes Ruehl), is to be buried near the grave of the couple's long-deceased daughter. But only three burial plots remain in the local cemetery, and those will likely be claimed by citizens overtaken by ailments of their own long before Roseanna passes away. What ensues is Marcello's desperate and often hilarious attempt to fulfill his dying wife's request.

An amalgam of international talents created this \$5.5 million independent production: director Paul Weiland (*City Slickers II: The Legend of Curly's Gold*, the TV series *Mr. Bean*) and cinematographer Henry Braham (*Soft Top Hard Shoulder*, *Solitaire for Two*) hail from Britain; the Italian couple is played by a French actor and an American actress; and screenwriter Saul Turteltaub is a veteran author of American sitcoms, with more than 1,000 episodes of such shows as *That Girl*, *The Jackie Gleason Show* and *Sanford and Son* to his credit. *Roseanna's Grave* is the first feature

Family Plot

Director Paul Weiland and cinematographer Henry Braham conceive a timeless aura for provincial Italy in *Roseanna's Grave*.

by Eric Rudolph

script Turteltaub has penned during a writing career that has spanned nearly 40 years.

Thirty-two-year-old cinematographer Braham has extensive experience in European commercials, and recently moved into features in his native England. A longtime film fanatic, he apprenticed with cinematographer John Von Kotze (*The Vengeance of Fu Manchu*, *The Million Eyes of Sumuru*), whom he describes as a

member of the "1950s Technicolor generation." Braham notes that Von Kotze "was more or less retired when we met and I worked on documentaries with him. He taught me how to look at things, and took me off to see the works of Dutch painters such as Rembrandt and Van Dyke."

The cameraman later broke into the "freestyle" world of European commercials, where, he says, "the more you experiment, the more you're admired." Braham had photographed numerous commercials for director Weiland before he was hired to shoot *Roseanna's Grave*.

In planning the picture, Weiland devised a distinct visual style that pushed the envelope of traditional comedic lighting tactics. He explains, "When you do comedy, there's an unwritten rule that you have to light brightly so you can see every joke. That's simply not my visual style. Photographically, we wanted this film to be beautiful,

which is why we chose our [respective] locations, and why we decided to shoot in the widescreen anamorphic format."

Braham agrees that it is not essential for contemporary comedies to be brightly lit purely out of service to the narrative. "The photographic range that is now allowable in comedy is wonderful. I feel it is important, if at all appropriate, to make films with a stylish look. In the case of *Roseanna*, the

Photos by Emilio Lari, courtesy of Fine Line Features.

script, and Paul's interpretation of it, dictated the look of the film. It's an intimate story with emotion, warmth and sensuality, but it also revolves around a terminally ill woman. It's a European picture which we infused with the warmth and pacing of an American film. It also has a certain timeless look, in keeping with the slightly fairytale quality of the piece."

The scenic surroundings of the mythic locale of Travento (shot in central Italy's hilltop town of Sermonetta) conjure up this sense of timelessness. Travento is a village in which the sole physician makes dotting house calls on patients who owe him a small fortune, all the while complaining that he can't afford to take his wife to the seaside; it's a place where the local boys rouse their elders from a leisurely shave in the barber shop to deal with a provincial emergency.

To achieve a look that would convey both the present and an unspecified past, the filmmakers opted for a limited color palette that would highlight "warm-end" shades — reds, greens and browns. Weiland and Braham also pushed for the film to be shot in anamorphic, believing that the expansive 2.35:1 canvas lends a film a greater cinematic quality.

Another reason for choosing the widescreen format was the town of Sermonetta itself, which offers narrow streets and Romanesque architecture dating back to 449 B.C. Notes production designer Rod McLean, "We decided to avoid Tuscany, which has been seen so often on the big screen. We chose Sermonetta because of its sturdy, slightly rougher beauty."

Offers Braham, "In a town like Sermonetta, with its terribly narrow streets, we could have ended up with a very claustrophobic look quite easily; it was important to us to be able to open the film up. Also, anamorphic allowed us to use the wonderful textures of the old buildings in our shots. It's

also a great format for a director in terms of working with actors, particularly in a comedy. You can really place people within the frame in an interesting manner, and play scenes within the frame more successfully."

Weiland echoes those sentiments, and further praises the anamorphic format for helping the crew keep to its tight, 42-day shooting schedule. Explains the director, "On a seven-week schedule, one would normally just be banging the light in and moving on. The goal here was to do something on a short schedule and make it look like a real movie, which Henry did wonderfully. Anamorphic not only made this a bigger movie, it also saved time; the wider screen allowed us to shoot two close-ups at once."

Braham, for his part, prefers a photographic approach that relies upon a minimal number of fixtures. "Shots that take me a long time to light are usually badly lit

and have no clear visual effect. If a shot appears to work simply, I think it is likely to have a good, clear visual feeling on the screen. We also needed to work quickly because of the short schedule, and because 90 percent of the town was inaccessible to trucks. We had to carefully choose what we were going to use to light each scene.

"The perfect situation for me is to put one light in the right place, doing the right thing," he maintains. "Even for night scenes, I like to use as few clearly defined sources as possible. It's so much more interesting when an actor is out of the main source, being hit by light reflecting from elsewhere."

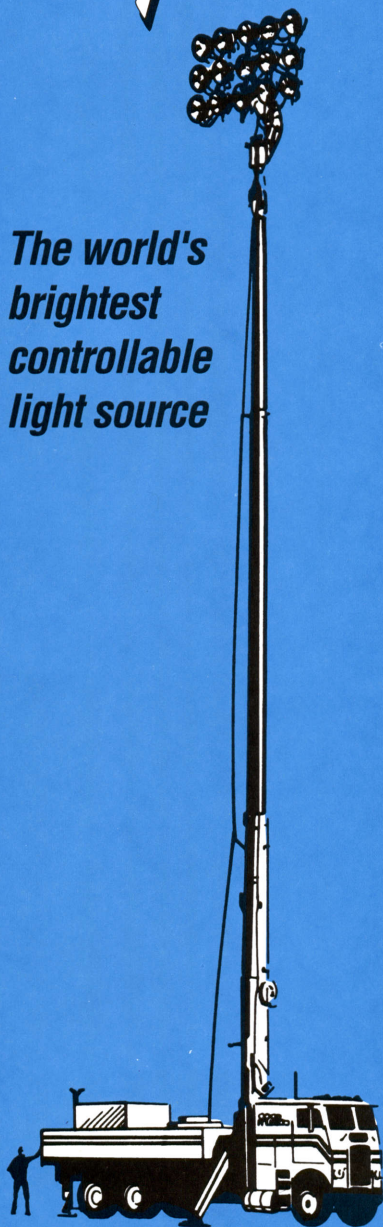
This minimalist lighting scheme was especially advantageous when Braham had to mimic the omnipresent Italian sunlight for the interior scenes. Due to Sermonetta's typically harsh illumination, the region's edifices (fashioned primarily out of limestone) are designed specifically to shade its inhabitants. Braham manipulated the small dark interiors and powerful window light to establish the feeling of a close-knit old-world community, a place where modern life exists amid cen-

Shooting in the Italian town of Sermonetta, Braham found that the architecture was designed with small windows intended to keep out both the region's bright sunshine and oppressive heat — resulting in strong shafts penetrating deep shadows. He often recreated this effect with 6K Cine-Pars and other sources augmenting natural sunlight.



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turies-old buildings steeped in small-town European traditions. As a result, characters are surrounded by a deep darkness punctuated by hard shafts or soft washes of light — a look similar to that of a Rembrandt painting.

Notes the cinematographer, "Italian houses have small windows and dark interior walls to help keep the heat out, so they tend to be dark inside. A common characteristic of these homes is strong shafts of light emanating from small windows.

"We decided to work with the way the light really falls in these small Italian houses, so most of the interiors were lit by strong sources placed outside the windows. We used mostly 6K Cine-Pars outside the windows, which are jolly powerful. Inside, we used small reflectors for fill and to direct the light, as well as small Chinese lanterns. My approach was to try to create as natural a light as possible, and then expose it so it would become theatrical. I might overexpose a visible shaft of light by four to five stops to give it some real heat as it hit the floor. In that type of situation, theatrical effects, such as under-lighting, were perfectly acceptable, because the strong light from the small windows bounced off the floor in unusual ways."

"When you're shooting small spaces, be they sets or locations, one of the important factors is your collaboration with the production designer," Braham notes. "You need to get the wall colors

right, and you need to pick up and direct the light from the source that you've placed outside of the window. We used clear varnish-like glazes in strategic patches; they helped us direct the main light where we needed it, rather than forcing us to put a separate light there. It's a quick and effective way of lighting, and the reflected light it produces is, for me, some of the best lighting in the film."

Braham, who filmed *Roseanna's Grave* with Panaflex Lightweight and GII cameras, works primarily in the English tradition of the lighting cameraman; he takes responsibility for illuminating each shot, while the camera moves are blocked out by the operator and director. "Kate Robinson, the operator on *Roseanna*, did a brilliant job. She is highly intuitive and was able to understand what the director needed. There is a real sense of urgency in the story, and her camera moves reflect Marcello's urgent desire to keep the townspeople from crowding his his wife out of the cemetery. Thanks in great part to Kate, the film has a rapid pace. Pace is extremely important, and it's one of those things you can only learn from making films."

The cinematographer utilized Panavision's older C-series anamorphic prime lenses, which he felt were more appropriate to the film's fairy-tale aesthetic. "I usually use Primos when I work with Panavision equipment, but this story required softer, more for-

The production often dampened harsh sunlight with silks, as the ENR process they used would so greatly increase contrast.

giving lenses. People say you don't need diffusion with the C-series lenses, and they're right; they are very flattering for actors."

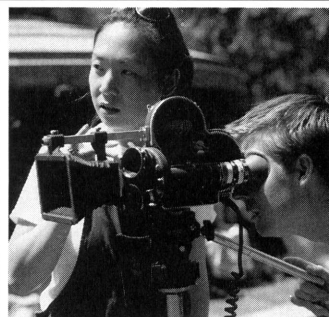
The cameraman broke with another long-standing comedic tradition — that of deep depth-of-field — by using his favored 4 or 4.5 T-stop whenever possible. However, the cinematographer finds that this tactic does have its inherent pitfalls. Says Braham, "Filmmaking is about choosing what to emphasize and not emphasize, and the lower stop can help one direct the viewer's eye. It can look fantastic and create depth if you keep certain things out of focus, but there's nothing more annoying than having an actor's face on screen with the ears soft, the eyes sharp and the nose soft. One has to be practical when working at the lower apertures."

The cinematographer also consistently favored longer-than-normal lenses, particularly the 75mm T2.5 C-series lens, because "long lenses are a natural for anamorphic; they work brilliantly, whereas the wide-angle lenses leave something to be desired. With the spherical format, you can use an 18mm lens and be effective, but with anamorphic you really don't want to go wider than 40mm, or maybe 35mm at most; the wider lenses tend to distort unless you have a really strong frame. I also like to use the longer lenses because they can add a painterly feeling, especially for exteriors. Using long lenses is a way to give scale to a picture."

Also found in Braham's lens package was the Super Panazoom 40-200mm T4.5. Due to its tight focus (down to 2 1/2 feet), this lens proved expedient in the close confines in which Braham frequently filmed; he used the zoom as a "variable prime" to accelerate the production's pace. Exteriors were also shot with a Nikon 600mm lens.

Braham chose Kodak's 5293 as his primary stock; night scenes were filmed with 5298. He says that he admires the former stock's latitude, even when the 200

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ASA emulsion is rated higher than normal. "The 93 is incredibly flexible," he comments. "On a previous film, I pushed 93 one stop and it worked brilliantly, retaining all of its characteristics, including low grain, good blacks and detail in the highlights. On *Roseanna*, I overexposed by about a half-stop. That's something I regularly do with 93, to enable us to print down, so we can crush the blacks and increase the contrast."

Release prints were struck using Technicolor's well-known ENR bleach-bypass process, pioneered by Vittorio Storaro, AIC, ASC and recently used by Darius Khondji on *Evita* [see AC Jan. '97]. Explains Braham, "We left in about 30 percent of the silver, because we wanted a film with rich blacks. It worked brilliantly with our color palette, which was heavily weighted toward the browns and ochres. We got the deep blacks but still maintained the warmth."

"The ENR process creates a loss of details in the shadows, but that benefitted the theatrical look we were seeking. When you look at a scene on the set, you just have to imagine it with the higher contrast it will have onscreen. The other caveat is that you have to take greater care than ever in lighting faces, especially those of women. The process increases the grain in the mid-tones, and if there are any makeup problems whatsoever, they will be magnified."

Since the cinematographer was striving for a high-contrast look, he did not lower the key-to-fill ratios as a means of compensating for the increase in contrast obtained through the ENR process. All sequences save those set at night utilized 1/8 coral filters to add warmth to the scenes. In addition, the prints were slightly corrected toward a warmer look in the timing process because of the ENR procedure's inherent color desaturation.

Braham says that the film's "compassion quotient" was his most important stylistic guideline, concluding, "I tried to respond to the warm emotional nature of the story, and to convey that feeling to the audience with my cinematography." ♦

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Jayelle Sargent: equipment from Clairmont never on the list of problems.

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“One item that can definitely be removed from the problem list is the equipment,” says Ms. Sargent. “When a producer wants to rent it locally or at a bargain rate, I tell him: *An unreliable camera means overtime.* If my DP rents Clairmont gear, I know my job will be that much easier.”

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Passion, Postmortem

Director Lynne Stopkewich and cinematographer Greg Middleton exhume taboos in *Kissed*, a first feature about a woman's lust for the lifeless.

by Michael X. Ferraro

Even in the wide-open world of independent cinema, the somewhat sordid subject matter of *Kissed* is off the beaten track. The film's attractive heroine, Sandra Larson (Molly Parker), is a decidedly odd young woman whose childhood fascination with dead creatures develops into a full-blown need for necrophilia. This Canadian production premiered at last fall's Toronto International Film Festival, where the black comedy was awarded a Special Jury Citation in the category of Best Canadian Feature Film.

During her teenage years in suburban Montreal, director Lynne Stopkewich developed a fascination for film when she made her first Super 8 movies. As an undergraduate film production major at Concordia University, Stopkewich made her award-winning 16mm shorts *The Flipped Wig* and *The \$3 Wash & Set*. She continued her studies in the MFA program at the University of British Columbia, and after graduation embarked upon a career as a production designer. Stopkewich now has more than a dozen Canadian and American films to her credit, including *Dangerous Desire*, *Tom and Bulletproof Heart*.

During the winter of 1994, Stopkewich was prepping to direct *Notell Motel*, a low-budget feature about one woman's sexual self-discovery. While researching tomes of female erotica, the director came across an anthology entitled *The Girl Wants To*, which included the short story "We So Seldom Look



on Love," by Canadian writer Barbara Gowdy. The filmmaker found herself riveted by the tale and quickly secured the rights for a cinematic adaptation.

Initial capital for the under \$1 million (Canadian) film came from private investments by family and friends of Stopkewich, producer Dean English, and executive producer/co-editor John Pozer. The National Film Board of Canada donated lab services to the production. Completing the budget were grants from the Canada Council Media Arts and Telefilm Canada, and finishing funds from British Columbia Film. Principal photography commenced a scant nine weeks after Stopkewich's Boneyard Film Company acquired permission to film Gowdy's yarn. Compounding matters was the fact that the picture's shooting win-

dow — 24 days during September to October of 1994 — fell during peak the production season in Vancouver, where the director now resides.

Recalls Stopkewich, "We approached the film commission here in town to see if they could sanction our production, and they told us we were crazy to be doing this kind of film, given that there were an unprecedented number of productions in town — approximately 32. Anyone who could hold a stop sign was already working. But because my hands were tied in terms of the time frame, I couldn't move the shooting schedule to a



down time. Ultimately when we came down to the crew, we had maybe a half-dozen people who had ever worked on a feature before, and the rest of them were people who loved the script and wanted to get their foot in the door on a film."

In the early stages of *Kissed*, Stopkewich's choice for cinematographer was Peter Wunstorf, CSC (*The Grocer's Wife*, *Double Happiness*, the pilot for *Millen-*

Top: Death becomes her. Necrophiliac medical student Sandra Larson (Molly Parker) cradles a coffined cadaver in the back of a hearse. Bottom: Vancouver-based director Lynne Stopkewich consults with cameraman Greg Middleton during an exterior scene.

Photos by David Ballard and Kharen Hill, courtesy of Boneyard Film company.



Sandra shares a sentimental moment with her aimless, angst-ridden boyfriend Matt (Peter Outerbridge) in his basement bachelor pad. The set was constructed in an unused room in the film's production offices. Stopkewich says this space was to be "orangey and wood-paneled, claustrophobic and hot," so Middleton gelled his lights for shot these scenes with full CTO and 1/2 straws.

nium), who had photographed *The Michelle Apartments*, a film on which she had served as production designer. But the director "thought it was a good idea to give someone their first break." Wurnstorf concurred and vouched for Greg Middleton, who had functioned as his camera operator on the aforementioned features.

After graduating from UBC's undergraduate film program in 1989, Middleton began working as an operator and second-unit cameraman. In 1992, the CSC honored Middleton with a Best Cinematography award (in the category of Dramatic Short) for *Hate Mail*, directed by Mark Sawers. The duo also collaborated on a no-budget short called *Stoked*, which was accepted as an Official Selection to the 1993 Cannes Film Festival. Since photographing *Kissed*, Middleton has shot *White Tiger*, *Wounded* and *Skyscraper*, another effort with Sawers.

Remarks Stopkewich, "I liked the idea of working with someone who hadn't shot a feature before, because when you get into those 20-hour days, you need someone who really wants the credit and will go the extra

mile. If you're not paying them what they're worth, then the least you can do is give them a chance."

Though *Kissed* is certain to arouse controversy due to its main character's craving for cadavers, the film nonetheless offers a rather viewer-friendly visual style. Notes Stopkewich, "I wanted to go in the completely opposite direction of what people would expect. Rather than showing the main character living in darkness, Greg and I tried to make her an 'angel of light,' as beautiful as possible at all times."

Offering his own opinion of this strategy, Middleton observes, "The character of Sandra is basically doing things that other people would find despicable to even contemplate. She doesn't do it for shock value, though. For her, it's an emotional experience. And if a film like this is going to work, you can't think of her as some freak. Sandra is a very attractive woman, and the film tries to convey the beauty of her experiences, from her point-of-view. In a lot of scenes, she's the one character that's backlit. Hopefully, the cumulative effect of such subtle effects will leave an impression, even if you're not fully aware of it."

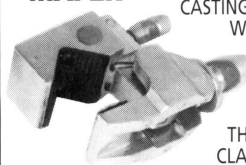
While fashioning the narrative, Stopkewich and screenwriter Angus Fraser had no desire to dwell on the origins of Sandra's disposition. Instead, *Kissed* opens innocently enough, with a detached, prepubescent Sandra (played by Natasha Morley) conducting reverent but somewhat bloody ceremonies for the dead animals she finds in the woods.

These vigils are so disturbing to outsiders that they cost the isolated Sandra her sole friend, and her contact with living beings becomes more tenuous than ever. In one scene, as she communes with a dead chipmunk, the young necrophile is suffused with sunlight — a moment that begins the progressive lighting scheme that Middleton gradually heightens in the more advanced phases of the film.

Years later, enrolled in medical school, Sandra takes up part-time employment at a funeral home, which enables her to more freely pursue her morbid fascination. The film leaves much of the resulting "necrotica" up to the viewer's imagination, but what Stopkewich and Middleton aimed to convey was the young

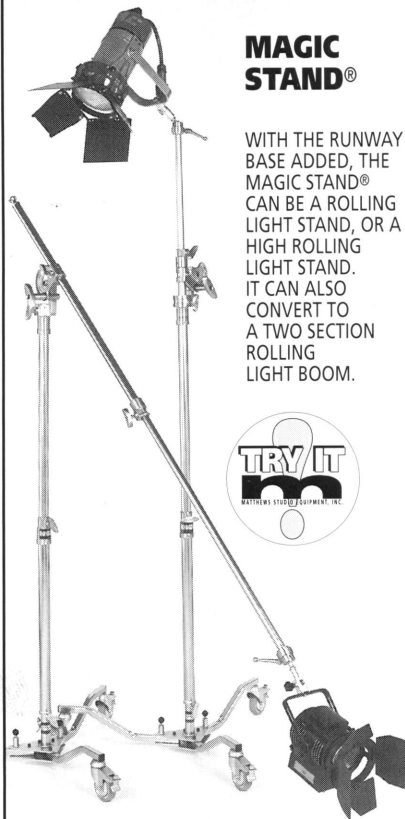
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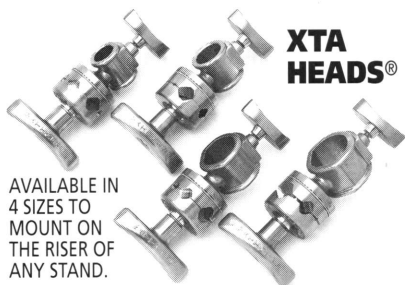
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In the funeral parlor prep room, Sandra contemplates an appealing corpse (Noel Boulanger).



woman's perspective during her unbidden encounters. As Stopkewich explains, "A lot of the directorial choices I made were based upon the idea of being in the moment with her.

I didn't want viewers to pull back and intellectualize the scene, or think, 'I can't believe what's happening!' I wanted to seduce the viewer as much as possible."

The scenes involving Sandra and the corpses presented conceptual challenges to Middleton. "In Gowdy's narrative, there are a few lines about 'white light,' he relates, "in which Sandra experiences a deep, personal, passionate moment with glowing bodies that shine like stars — it's an idea of luminosity. We used that as a crucial element, especially in scenes when she was with a body, but we tried to avoid making it so obvious that it was intrusive."

More overt lighting manipulation was reserved for moments when Sandra experiences what Stopkewich describes as a "revelation." Offers Middleton, "The more emotionally involved she becomes, the brighter the light is on her. When she climbs on top of the corpse at the funeral home, we're 4 1/2 or 5 stops overexposed. [Actress] Molly Parker's skin was pale to begin with, so we got a kind of luminosity that started to expose beyond the edges of where the light was hitting [the negative]. It burned so much that it started to blur the edges, so sometimes I used a filter to augment the look."

Middleton occasionally chose to "heat up" the screen, or a portion of it, by sliding in a graduated fog filter. One example is a scene in which Sandra drives a hearse through a car wash. "I could add more halo to one side of the frame during the shot," he says.

Kissed was shot in 16mm with a Arriflex SR11 procured from Panavision Canada. The cinematographer notes that the film's

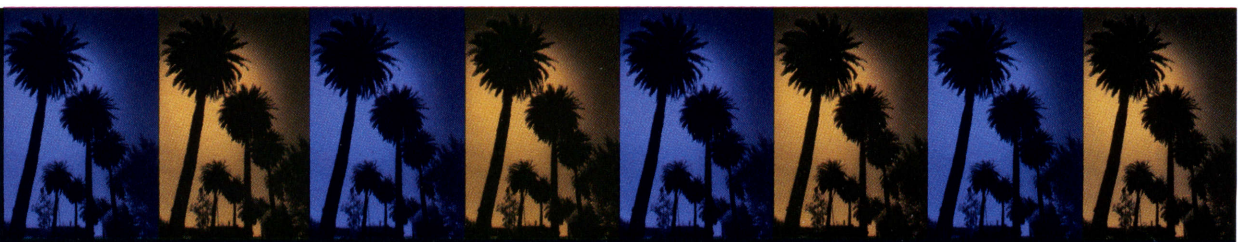
framing reflects the camera's 1.33:1 format, and not the standard 1.85. The eventual 1.66:1 blowup was a compromise that resulted in an estimated 15-20 percent difference in frame height.

The cameraman exclusively employed Fuji stocks: the 64 ASA, daylight-balanced Super-F 8621, used for roughly half the film; the tungsten-balanced, 125 ASA 8631; and the company's now-discontinued 8610, a 64 ASA tungsten emulsion. "These are extremely slow films, especially for night and interiors," notes Middleton. "A lot of our interiors were shot on the 64, and if you overexpose it slightly, which I was, you're working with 50 ASA. That requires quite a lot of light." Middleton notes that Conrad Hall, ASC's work on *Searching for Bobby Fischer* and *Jennifer 8* was a major influence to his photography for *Kissed*. He describes Hall's work on those films as being "brilliantly natural, but clearly stylized."

Middleton reserves special praise for camera operator Brian Pearson, as well as a phalanx of veteran focus pullers (nine are acknowledged) who contributed an odd day to the production when their schedules allowed. His lens package included a Zeiss 10:1 zoom and a small selection of primes, which he tried to use "as often as possible, because they're a bit sharper and don't breathe as much. We ended up using fairly high light levels, but fairly wide-open stops, so focus was much more critical, especially considering that we were hoping to blow [the picture] up to 35mm."

Middleton was also pleased with the HMI package he received from George Margellos at

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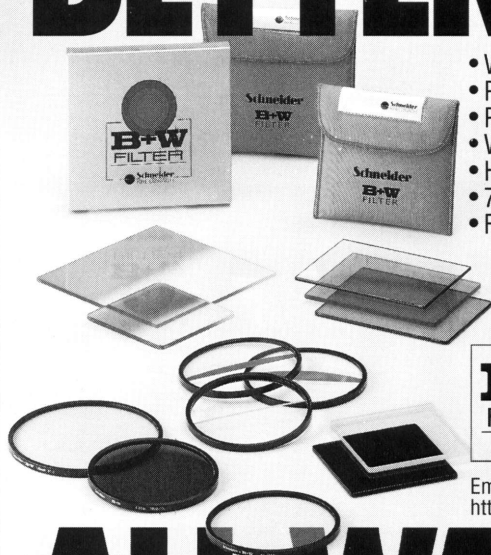
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ALL WAYS

William F. White, Ltd. He cites gaffer John Macintosh as another crucial player, since *Kissed* never had an actual key grip during production.

Fortunately for the less-seasoned crew members, the shoot was not physically demanding; stationary camera shots were standard, because the director wanted Sandra's dealings with the outside world to appear as moments frozen in time. Comments Stopkewich, "Most of the film was shot with the kind of static coverage favored by [American exploitation director] Russ Meyer. I only used camera moves for moments where Sandra is having transcendent moments with death."

In fact, the only sequence she and Middleton committed to storyboards was a fluid, highly charged love scene between the protagonist and a recently embalmed man. The sequence was filmed with a prototype rolling jib arm designed by a member of the Vancouver-based film cooperative Cineworks. All other camera moves were executed on a skateboard dolly with plastic pipe typically used for interior plumbing.

"It was really fantastic," raves Stopkewich about the jib arm. She concedes, "I probably would have used a lot more moving camera if I'd had a more experienced crew and more time. Whenever you move the camera, you exponentially add to the time necessary to do the shot."

Since the production's desired locations tended to drop faster than Sandra's lovers, two key sets were built — one after the other — in the same empty space in the *Kissed* production offices. The area first served as the funeral home's "prep room" — the site of Sandra's romantic rendezvous. Entering this space, says Stopkewich, "was supposed to be like diving into a lake. We wanted to make it really cool and crisp, silent and expansive." In the embalming scenes, Middleton accomplished this with a soft, overhead, cooler-temperature light created by bouncing two 2,500-watt HMI Pars off the ceiling, which was covered with white laminated corkboard. The love scenes, meanwhile, were illuminated solely with a 2K spot-

light over the body.

The area was then converted into the basement bachelor pad belonging to Sandra's obsessive boyfriend, Matt (Peter Outerbridge), a medical school dropout. Remarks the director, "Matt's apartment was supposed to be orangey and wood-paneled, claustrophobic and hot." Middleton says that he achieved the humid ambience by employing strong gels; all scenes were shot with a full CTO and 1/2 straws so that the apartment appeared "warm and cozy, almost as if you're sweating in there."

During postproduction, Stopkewich teamed with John Pozer and Roeck to edit the film. She says the trio was meticulous to the point of "going through and logging every single frame of the 16mm workprint that had any dust on it when we started to do our blowup. It was a 17-page log. The people at DuArt thought I was insane, but in the end it worked out really well. After we got the blowup back they basically said it was the finest regular 16mm blowup they'd produced in 10 years." Middleton concurs, noting that much credit for the success is owed to color timer Kent McGrew.

Since the film had not been framed for the blowup, Stopkewich also utilized the lab's vertical scanning machine, which allows each shot to be scrutinized individually. "I changed the scanning marks 175 times, and that's very expensive," says Stopkewich. "But it was important to me that the footage looked properly framed."

In the end, such excruciating efforts were necessary to produce the most pristine print possible of *Kissed*. Stopkewich elaborates, "I'm asking the audience to take a big leap in terms of concept — to sympathize and care about this character. Any technical glitch might take them out of the story completely. It's really important, at some level, for viewers to lose themselves in the character and in the film. If scratches, dirt or even a soft shot were to come up, they'd be reminded that they were watching a movie, which would distance them from the material." ♦



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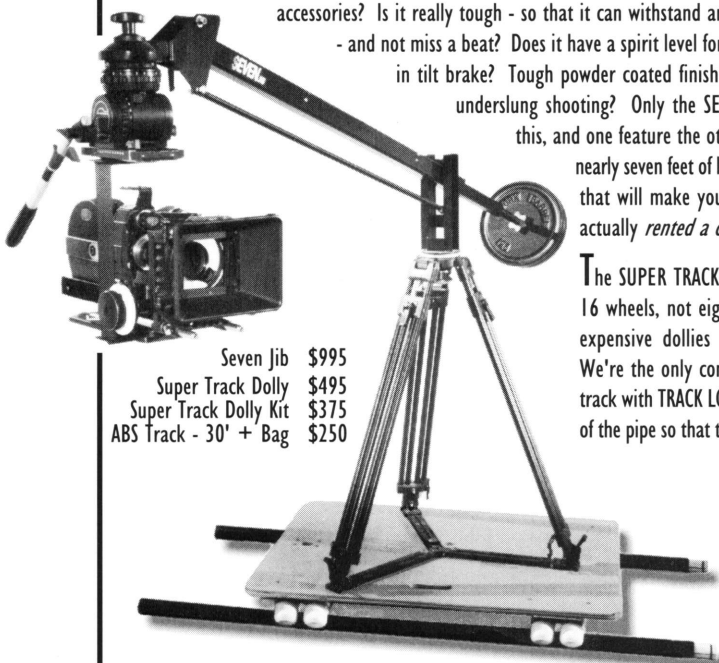
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A leather-clad Druid emerges from the shadows. While smoke and fog effects add ambience to *Darklands*, cameraman Zoran Djordjevic kept their use to a minimum to ensure the sharpest image possible.



Photos by Jaap Buitendijk, courtesy of Julian Richards.

Aura of Evil

Welsh director Julian Richards and Yugoslavian cameraman Zoran Djordjevic mix pagan myths with the detective genre in *Darklands*.

by David E. Williams

Filmmaker Julian Richards grew up in Newport, South Wales, on a steady diet of Hammer Studios horror films and American genre pictures he saw on television. Movies such as *Jaws* and *Star Wars* later inspired him to shoot Super 8 shorts of his own as teenager. While a student at Bournemouth Film School, Richards made the award-winning films *Pirates* and *Queen Sacrifice*. In 1988, he enrolled in London's National Film & Television School, and while in his first year of studies began concurrently directing programs for both the BBC and S4C, the Welsh-language channel. His formal education culminated with the production of the short *Bad Company*, which was selected for screening at the AFI Los Angeles International Film Festival and other venues.

During this time, Richards penned the script for *Darklands*, which follows an English investigative reporter (Craig Fairbrass) as he stumbles across a series of unsolved disappearances in a Welsh steel town — possibly linked to an ultra-nationalist political group bent on reverting the country back to the "old ways." Further probing reveals that those who have vanished are the victims of a Druid cult led by the nationalists, and that the reporter himself is being drawn into their arcane practices.

Darklands faced the perennial problem of all indie projects — financing — because its subject matter was deemed too provincial by some prospective backers and too popular by others. Explains Richards, "I'm a European who has been primarily influenced by American films. Europe has set itself up as an alternative to Hollywood; therefore, mainstream cinema has been marginalized. Films are funded in Britain by arts councils or through TV companies like the BBC and Channel 4, who go for very political, social-realist dramas. Here, film *has* to be art, and if money is involved, then the art is compromised. Meanwhile, *Darklands* is an aggressively commercial film.

"Unlike America or France, where there is a cinematic culture, we have a very middle-

class theater and literature culture — it's the 'classics.' But I'm a working-class kid who grew up watching American B-movies. The films I've wanted to make are too [oriented towards] 'genre' and mainstream to be supported by either the arts councils or television. And because I still wanted to work in my own country, *Darklands* was considered to be too parochial for American backing."

Ultimately, Richards found financing through Metrodome, an English production company which came aboard after the cultural aspects of the *Darklands* story, and the director's own heritage, qualified the project for funding through the Arts Council of Wales. Richards notes, "Because Wales could easily be assimilated into English culture, the people of Wales are willing to jump in and support anything that will put the country on the map."

"*Darklands* is an ambitious film in that it has a lot of characters and locations, and we made it for just £500,000. Ideally, when you have that kind of budget, you want to do something like *Reservoir Dogs*, in which you have a small bunch of characters and action that primarily takes place in a single location. On this film we defiantly bit off more than we could chew at times. For example, we used locations that were often our third or fourth choices. I knew we had better options, but we didn't have the time to drive the extra 100 miles to get to them. We would have lost too many shots."

In developing an aesthetic for *Darklands*, Richards chose to emulate the richly saturated, atmospheric approach of the Hammer Studios films he loved as a child and still admires — which were



Left: A reporter (Craig Fairbrass) seeks answers for a series of murders. Djordjevic (lower right) used daylight-balanced film in order to make the most of his HMI lighting package while augmenting natural sources, such as windows. Lower left: The film's Druid ritual sequences were shot in a working warehouse. Shooting on 200 ASA-rated film, Djordjevic lit these scenes to T4 or higher to prevent the fire effects from burning out white.



ences] are great because they are already made and easily communicated, but they're also part of someone else's vision. The visual process for me is to 'see again' or reinvent images that I have experienced firsthand. That's an approach I developed as a painter. In that way, we were coming from different creative directions; there were things we had to work out, but that process added to our collaboration."

Prior to shooting *Darklands*, Djordjevic had primarily photographed short films and commercials (for such clients as Ogilvy & Mather and Christian Dior), as well as second-unit footage for cinematographer Andrzej Sekula (*Reservoir Dogs*) on the features *Hackers*, *Further Gesture* and *Cousin Bette*.

Djordjevic, who had pre-

shot in Technicolor by such British cameramen as Jack Asher, BSC (*Dracula*, *The Brides of Dracula*) and Arthur Grant, BSC (*The Reptile*, *Curse of the Werewolf*).

To execute this visual plan, Richards called upon cinematographer Zoran Djordjevic, a British-bred Yugoslavian native who also attended the National Film & Television School. Recalls the cameraman, "Julian came to me with all the things he was excited about, such as film references. [Such refer-

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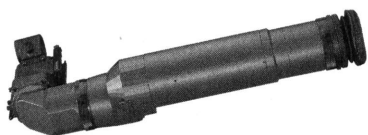
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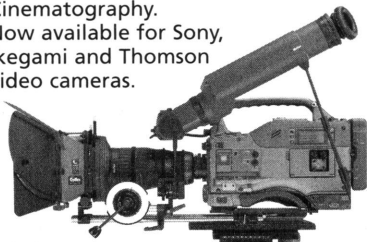
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viously scouted Wales for another film involving mills and factories, recalls being quite taken with the film's script and "the devastating industrial landscape setting, which was quite incredible. It's bleak in many ways, but there's an definite visual attraction, as it offers a lot of opportunities for lighting."

The imagery of *Darklands* — graphic and color-filled, yet laden with deep shadows — brings to mind the work of American artist Edward Hopper. "There is a certain observation of bleakness [in Hopper's oeuvre], which one might see in a painting like *Night Hawks*," Djordjevic agrees. "That painting has been referred to in a number of films, but its sense of loneliness and desolation were things our story pertained to as well."

In conveying that ambience of isolation, the cameraman kept a tight rein on the film's color scheme. "I was very conscious of not using blue," remarks Djordjevic. "For instance, the convention for nighttime lighting is to use blue, but that's been over used. Instead, I tried to give the film an operatic feel, taking advantage of the industrial sodium-vapor yellows and the rawness of the fluorescent fixtures. And while we did a lot of correction and balancing, those colors were designed to be in sync with the story — cut together, scenes would have colors that flowed from one to the other."

The cameraman adds that the layout of the locations often dictated his lighting approach. "About 99 percent of the film was shot on location," Djordjevic says, "and in a lot of those cases, the locations were very ordinary-looking. They were workplaces — hospitals, factories, warehouses — that were designed to be functional, not the setting for a fantasy. What I wanted to do was give them a twist — not to make them a lighting showcase, but to go just a bit off-center in order to make the audience feel that something unusual was happening. In certain cases, this meant amplifying what was there, but in others, like the location where the pagan ceremony scenes take place, the design was completely artificial."

The nighttime Druid ritual sequences were shot in a working warehouse used to store massive steel coils. An overall topight was created by production designer Hayden Pearce's use of large "coolie" shades, which were installed with new fixtures. Hung from the ceiling, the practicals "gave us a dark, dingy feeling and enough light to basically see what was going on," says Djordjevic, "but I wanted to make the sacrifice scenes attractive in a certain way, with the yellowish-red fire from torches writhing into this whitish light."

Not surprisingly, the open-air structure soaked up a disproportionate amount of light. And as Djordjevic reminds, "We had an extremely limited lighting budget, so it was a constant negotiation as to how many lights we could have each day. I had to be quite precise about what I needed. I always knew that having a limited budget was no excuse for not getting the look we wanted, but saying it is one thing and doing it is another."

Since Djordjevic shot *Darklands* in Super 16 for blowup to 35mm, he had to use the slowest stocks possible to reduce grain. "I usually rely on Eastman stocks, but was presented with Fuji on this project because of budgetary considerations," he says. "I took a few rolls and did some basic tests to see what the grain structure was like, where it began to fall apart and where I lost shadow detail. The stocks I chose were the daylight-balanced F-64 [8621] and F-250 [8661]. To get the best possible negative, I rated them both a bit under to get about a half-stop more exposure."

"I was able to do several printing tests and thought the F-250 was probably the stock that would give me the most options and the best consistency. To prepare for the blowup, I did talk quite a bit with the lab, Soho Images in London, but I also recalled a conversation I once had with Oswald Morris [BSC, *A Farewell To Arms*, *Lolita*] who has been very influential on my thoughts about lighting."

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use your eyes, use slower stocks and build up the light. Although those guys in the Sixties did that mainly because stocks and lenses were slower, the concept still holds true. I like that approach because it actually frees me up to be more flexible during shooting, while also allowing me to maintain a basic control of the stop and the overall look of the film. In respect to *Darklands*, I feel this approach was certainly valid, since the final image was to be two opticals away."


Djordjevic continues, "I chose daylight stocks because I wanted an overall warmer feel to the film — and to avoid blues — and also because that made our HMIs 'normal,' allowing us to go down from there [if we wanted to use gels]. If we had used tungsten-balanced film, we would have had to gel [the fixtures] and lose a stop. It was another economic choice, but one which also inverted our thinking in terms of controlling color temperatures.


"To be fair, the latitude of the Fuji stocks was pretty good. And while 200 ASA isn't slow, you really have to light it to make things look right. Everything had to be re-created in some sense, even if it was just supposed to look 'natural,' and lit to levels that were fairly considerable. We were always within a T2.8 and a 4.

"In the warehouse, for instance, I tended to augment and bring out the grid iron and coils with a lavender gel, which helped counteract the brown coloring," Djordjevic notes. The crosslighting emitted from 12Ks at the rear of the warehouse and 6Ks to the side created that effect.

Shooting at higher stops also brought out the colors of the scene's flame effects, which would have burned out as white "if we were anywhere below a T4. So sometimes we would build up the stop even beyond what we needed for the stocks in order to accentuate the flames."

Sensitive to the inclusion of any effects that might compromise the sharpness of his footage, Djordjevic utilized as little smoke as possible, but notes that "although the contrast in our lighting design was devised mainly with





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our story in mind, it also helped with the perceived sharpness of the images. We tried to use three-dimensional lighting to bring out the shapes and forms of objects, instead of letting the images become flat or overcooked."

Djordjevic used Zeiss lenses and an Arriflex SR3 during *Darklands'* 32-day shoot, and relied on that combination all the more because the production's budget did not allow for film dailies. "I didn't see a single frame of projected footage until we went in to do the grading," he says with a chuckle. "I really had to concentrate on the images I had in my mind to stay consistent. We did have one-light video rushes, and I did watch them on a few occasions, but again, you're watching footage on a television, which has no bearing to reality. There's no way to judge anything."

While squeezing every ounce of wattage out of his lighting package was an imperative for the nighttime sequences, the cinematographer points out that "there was also the problem of having too much light as the sun was coming up. We would be shooting all through the night, and we began to worry that the sun was breaking just out of frame. On one night, when shooting at a train station, we had an extremely ambitious schedule and the sun was coming up before we could finish. The producer suggested that we stop, but I said, 'Wait a second' and called for drapes to be set up. By the time we finished, we had things boxed in fairly well and relit so we could continue to shoot. Doing day-for-night is really a question of contrasts. We could use the emerging daylight as our fill — in a way, we were inverting the notion of magic hour."

Djordjevic says that his 35mm interpositive from the Fuji original was struck on Eastman Kodak's 5244 and then transferred to a 7244 internegative. He describes both Kodak stocks as "absolutely fantastic, with incredible grain structure that allowed me to pull back a bit on the contrast."

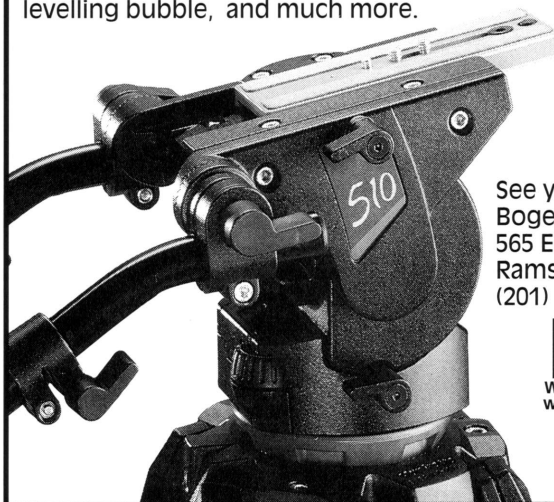
The cinematographer acknowledges that his previous second-unit feature work with

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Andrzej Sekula was an extremely educational experience that helped him prepare for his feature debut on *Darklands*. He maintains, "I think you have to be ready with a lot solutions in mind to do a picture like this on location and still come in on a reasonable schedule. You can't be making things up or figuring them out [on the spot], because there isn't the time. This has also been a formative experience since we were working with slower stocks and equipment that had to be used at a good stop — lenses that were only going to start performing well at T4 instead of wide-open.

"Any cinematographer can get an image very quickly, but that's not important. What is important is to get a good image that you can control and sustain consistently. A good image is one that is technically and stylistically appropriate. What informs that image in cinematographic terms is the background work and an understanding of basic visual principals. I could say that the art of cinematography is improvisation, in the cause of telling the story, with all of the ability one can muster.

"At the end of the day, all that is left is a piece of celluloid that represents the efforts and dreams of the collective. The responsibility for capturing that can be daunting, but I'm not complaining. Cinematography is exciting, stimulating work and I wouldn't change [my profession] for the world."

Concedes writer/director Richards, "*Darklands* was a bit of a miserable experience for me in terms of shooting. I had this big machine behind me that had to keep moving. My cameraman tackled the process in a very professional, classical way; the image was the most important thing. Zoran has done a wonderful job, but as a storyteller I had to sacrifice a lot for that [imagery].

"You never stop learning in making films," Richards concludes. "In that respect, I'm proud of the experience, because *Darklands* is the best-looking film I've ever made, and I can thank the cinematographer for that." ♦



Becky (Dana Wynter), Theodora (Carolyn Jones), Miles (Kevin McCarthy) and Jack (King Donovan) make a horrifying discovery in the Belicec greenhouse.

A Case for Insomnia

“Pod people” became a chilling metaphor for the Cold War in sci-fi’s ultimate paean to paranoia, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*.

by George Turner

For almost half a century following the end of World War II, America was wracked with fears of atomic annihilation by one or more of its former allies. Families took out mortgages to have nuclear bomb shelters built in their back yards. Grandstanding politicians ran amok “rooting out Communists” and succeeded mainly in ruining many lives, including their own. Adding to this atmosphere of abject suspicion were the ubiquitous reports of unidentified flying objects.

Little wonder, then, that moviegoers of the 1950s were engulfed by yarns about invaders from other nations and other planets. From an avalanche of awful, fast-buck productions on this subject, there emerged a handful of jewels during 1951-53, notably

The Thing, *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, *War of the Worlds*, *Invaders from Mars*, and *It Came from Outer Space*.

Another first-rate film sprouted up, belatedly, in 1956: *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*. With a final cost of \$416,911, this didn’t really qualify as a “big” picture; either the “ambitious B” or “nervous A” category would have been appropriate. Comprising the cast were several excellent, stage-trained actors whose names, unfortunately, meant little in terms of box-office draw. The picture’s chances for choice playdates were nil because it belonged to a genre that had fallen into disrepute, and also bore the brand of Allied Artists, which exhibitors remembered by its former name, Monogram, a studio that had specialized in low-bud-

Right: The Belicecs, Miles and Becky study the unfinished duplicate of Jack. Bottom: McCarthy, Wynter, cinematographer Fredericks and director Siegel prepare to film one of picture's most harrowing scenes in the mine tunnel.



get productions. Allied was now producing the occasional prestige picture, along with low-budget items such as the *Bowery Boys* and *Bomba the Jungle Boy* series.

On the other hand, the producer of *Body Snatchers* was Walter Wanger, a top-of-the-line veteran who at the time was a trifle tarnished and battle-scarred. Famed for the likes of *Queen Christina*, *The Trail of the Lonesome Pine*, *Algiers*, *Stagecoach*, *Foreign Correspondent*, *Canyon Passage* and *Scarlet Street*, Wanger landed at Allied after a disastrous fall from power. Between 1932 and 1948, he had produced 51 major features for MGM, Columbia, Paramount, Universal and United Artists. However, he then formed an independent company to make an epic production of *Joan of Arc* starring Ingrid Bergman. This film cost \$4,650,506 and went in the red to the tune of \$2,480,436. Refusing to seek bankruptcy protection, he made two good pictures for Eagle Lion and another for Columbia in 1948-49, but lost heavily on all three.

Wanger then languished among the unemployed until June of 1951, when his friends at Monogram Pictures, Walter and Harold Mirisch and Steve Broidy, offered him a producer's berth. Monogram had survived many years on Poverty Row. At \$12,500 and 14 percent of net profits per picture, Wanger's contract was a far cry from the cushy deals he had enjoyed during his days at the majors.

He restored his reputation in 1954, at the newly renamed Allied Artists, by producing the hit picture *Riot in Cell Block 11* for just \$298,780. The success of *Riot* was a shot of financial adrenalin for Wanger, Allied and director Don Siegel.

Wanger and Siegel would soon team up again. Jack Finney's novel *The Body Snatchers* had been serialized in *Collier's* magazine in November and December of 1954. Wanger submitted it as a film project to the AA management, along with five other properties, and AA bought the screen rights immediately. Impressed by Siegel's no-nonsense yet expressive directorial style, Wanger was anxious for him to

direct the picture. Siegel signed on to the tune of \$21,688.

When *Riot* scribe Richard Collins proved unavailable, Siegel suggested Daniel Mainwaring, with whom the director had collaborated on three prior films. Mainwaring, a popular novelist under both his own name and the pseudonym Geoffrey Homes, wrote the script in close consultation with Siegel. Collins later worked on several scenes after principal photography had commenced.

As originally filmed, the picture opens with Dr. Miles Bennell (Kevin McCarthy) returning from a medical convention to the little town of Santa Mira after receiving a frantic call from his nurse, Sally Withers (Jean Willes). She reports that growing numbers of townspeople are in the grip of a weird hysteria that makes them believe that their relatives and friends are

imposters. Miles and his former sweetheart, Becky Driscoll (Dana Wynter), along with their friends Dr. Dan Kaufman (Larry Gates) and Jack and Theodora Belicec (King Donovan, Carolyn Jones), gradually realize that more and more of the townspeople are losing their emotional and spiritual identities, retaining only the passion for mere survival. Although their outward appearances remain unchanged, family and friends perceive them as strangers. As the mystery progresses, the friends confront a horrific development in the Belicec greenhouse, where a



huge seed pod is gradually changing into Jack's likeness. It becomes evident that the pods came from outer space; after one assumes the form of a person, it then takes over the victim completely while he or she sleeps.

Only Becky and Miles elude pod-control, by staying awake and pretending to be converts. Their ruse is discovered, however, when Becky cries out as a dog barely escapes road-kill status. Pursued by a pod-controlled mob, they flee to a mine tunnel and hide all night, and most of the next day, under boards covering a shallow excavation.

During their ordeal, Miles hears the sounds of angelic music and goes to investigate. He sees the townspeople harvesting pods from a large greenhouse and loading them into trucks. When he returns to Becky, he discovers that she has fallen asleep. He picks her up and carries her to a different exit. When Becky awakens he kisses her, but Miles realizes that she is a lost cause once he stares deep into her glazed gaze. "Stop acting like a fool and accept us," she says before screaming, "He's in here!" Closely pursued, Miles flees until at last he reaches a freeway crowded with cars. Running blindly through the headlights, he tries to warn the drivers. He then climbs aboard a truck bound for Los Angeles and San Francisco, only to find that it's filled with pods. The picture originally concluded with Miles staggering crazily among the cars and then up to the camera, screaming, "They're here already! You're next! You're next! You're next!"

Mainwaring's skill at mastering dialogue was

most conspicuously illustrated in his story and script for RKO's great 1947 film noir, *Out of the Past*. He and Collins brought a definite noir quality to *Body Snatchers*, as well as plenty of crackling talk. They let the converted Dr. Kaufman explain the hideous situation in a bone-chillingly bland manner: "Think of the marvelous thing that has happened. Seeds drifting through space for years, ... took root by chance in a farmer's field, to offer us an untroubled world ... There's no need for love."

Miles responds, "No emotions? Then you have no feelings, only the instinct to survive? You can't love or be loved, right?"

Kaufman explains patiently, "You say it as if it were terrible. Believe me, it isn't. You've been in love before. It didn't last. It never does. Love, desire, ambition, faith — without them life's so simple, believe me."

Ellsworth Fredericks, ASC was assigned to photograph *Body Snatchers*. He had started as assistant cameraman to John Seitz, ASC in 1927, and was dividing his time between making TV dramas for MCA and features at Allied Artists, for whom he photographed 13 pictures in four years.

Art director Ted Haworth, who had designed Alfred Hitchcock's *Strangers on a Train* and *I Confess*, began busily scouting locations on the first week of January, 1955. To represent the fictitious Santa Mira, he first considered Mill Valley (located to the north of San Francisco) which had been Finney's model for the doomed town. He and Siegel decided on Sierra Madre, a beautiful, hill-laden San Gabriel Valley town just north of Pasadena. Principal photography commenced on March 23, with five days of exteriors in Sierra Madre. A few other location shots were captured in the Los Angeles area, after which interiors were shot at the studio. On April 7, the film's long climactic chase, which had begun in Sierra Madre, was continued on Mulholland Drive — a thoroughfare which snakes over the Santa Monica Mountains from Hollywood to the Pacific — and in the granite crags and caves of Brush Quarry in Bronson Canyon, a part of the parks administration in Hollywood.

Brush Quarry — as it had in hundreds of serials, Westerns and horror films — provided ominous shapes that added to the film's suspense and terror. Cold fear mounts after the couple takes refuge in the dark mine tunnel. Lying in a muddy depression under some boards, they listen to the approach of the pod people and glimpse their running feet and flashlight beams through the spaces between the boards. The sound effects are as harrowing as the visuals.

The climactic night scenes of Miles' hysterical attempts to stop traffic on the freeway were actually filmed before dawn on a little crossing bridge, utilizing about 50 vehicles driven by professional stunt drivers. Although McCarthy teetered dangerously close to fatigue, the actor performed the hazardous sequence without a double.

Before even a frame of film had been shot, the filmmakers decided to minimize the use of special effects, avoiding process screens and opticals in favor of both realism and economy. The only exceptions to the rule were full-scale seed pods and embryo bodies,



which cost about \$30,000 overall. Ted Hayworth designed ten rubber pods for the transformation scenes, while many non-functioning ones were crafted from plastic.

It was also necessary to make latex replicas of the nude bodies of McCarthy, Wynter, Jones and Donovan to be revealed (but also tastefully concealed) in a welter of froth and bubbles when the pods burst open. After a studio executive called Siegel to his office and informed him that nudity would never blemish an Allied Artists picture, the director had the body casts made in secret. Siegel openly quipped that the executive himself had become a pod.

Milt Rice described the making of the pods when the effects were submitted for Academy Award consideration: "The construction began with the sculpturing of full-sized clay models. From these models, casts were made and form molds taken. Liquid latex was used to make the 'skins' of the pods, and these skins were, in turn, mounted on mechanized frames. In addition, life-sized replicas of the four principals and 'embryo blanks' were also constructed in the above manner.

"During actual operation, hydraulics were used to manipulate the action of the pods," he added. "Compressed air and chemicals were employed to cause the pods to pulsate and emit frothy substances, as well as [to force] the embryos from the pods. Substitution of life-sized replicas of principals was handled manually."

The "birth" scenes were overcranked so that the bubbles appeared to burst ponderously; the footage was then printed in reverse so that the bubbles seemed to be flattening onto the skins of the embryos. The "unfinished" blank look of the pale embryos is not gruesome, but subtly horrifying.

The picture's principal shoot wrapped on April 18, after 10 days of rehearsal and 19 days of photography. Postproduction would prove to be much more time-consuming. For a month, Siegel

Preparing for conquest, the transformed citizens of Santa Mira load pods for distribution to other towns.

toiled with the studio editorial supervisor, Richard Heermance, to create a rough cut. Studio chiefs already had demanded the deletion of several humor-tinted scenes that Siegel and Mainwaring believed to be vital to the story's overall realism. Wanger complained in general about the "sharp, so-called 'B' cutting." He also had McCarthy, who was then in New York, record the opening narration from Finney's book and dub some dialogue.

Fredericks' photographic touches greatly enhance the story. The early town scenes, presented with long takes, bright daylight and eye-level camera angles reminiscent of the *Blondie* and *Hardy Family* series films, evoke realistic normality. Miles is sometimes shown from a slight low angle to emphasize his strength and dependability. When the pods are discovered, the filmmakers employ a few "Dutch angles" and sharp tilts. As the nefarious alien plot is revealed, the shadows become darker and viewers are treated to some deep-focus shots in the best *Citizen Kane* tradition. This tactic is particularly chilling when the pods are shown with the humans they will replace; in one shot, Jack's pod double awakens on a pool table in the foreground as Jack sleeps at a bar behind it. The climactic high-contrast scenes of flashlights and hulking silhouettes in the dark cave, including pit-shots of the pod-people thundering over the lovers' hiding place, could hardly be better.

Wanger was horrified to learn that the Allied execs opted to release the picture in SuperScope, an anamorphic widescreen process introduced by RKO Radio in 1954. It differed from CinemaScope in that the photography was done with normal lenses; the images were squeezed at the printing stage rather than in the camera. Wanger argued that a duped image would not do justice to Dana Wynter's beauty, that the carefully wrought compositions would be ruined, and that the widescreen effect would make the picture resemble recent inferior anamorphic sci-fi pictures. Again, he was overruled — widescreen was considered a "must" at the time due to the perceived competition with television for audiences. Incidentally, Wanger was dead right on all counts.

The damage caused by this last-minute decision can hardly be exaggerated. Fredericks had composed the picture for the 1.33:1 ratio, and the image-chopping required to obtain the 2:1 ratio needed for SuperScope not only destroyed the compositions, but left important details out of the frame. In addition, the images became grainier when the remaining frame was blown up to fill the wide screens. Only a very good movie could survive such butchery; somehow, *Body Snatchers* did.

The makers of the film wanted a high-class title for the film. McCarthy suggested *Sleep No More*, while Siegel came up with *Better Off Dead*. The studio, wanting something more sensational, submitted *They Came from Another World*. The final choice of the executives was a compromise, combining a typical sci-fi title with novelist Jack Finney's original.

Wanger wanted to add a prologue and epilogue that emphasized the reality of the film, and linked it to actual struggles with totalitarianism in

America and abroad. He thought of opening with a quotation from Winston Churchill, but was refused permission. His attempts to get Orson Welles to do the prologue failed as well. The producer's next notion was to feature a famous news analyst interviewing Miles in his hospital bed as an opening lead-in. After unsuccessfully approaching several noted broadcast journalists — Edward R. Murrow, Lowell Thomas, Quentin Reynolds, and John Cameron Swayze — he gave up on the idea.

Studio executives agreed with Wanger about the necessity of a framing prologue and epilogue, and brought Mainwaring back to write them. The prologue shows a police car bringing Mark, disheveled and half-crazed, to a hospital where he tries in vain to convince both a psychiatrist (Whit Bissell) and a doctor (Richard Deacon) that seed pods are taking over the planet. In the epilogue, an ambulance brings an emergency case to the hospital. After the driver explains that the man was injured in a crash with a truck loaded with huge seed pods, the psychiatrist places a call to the FBI.

Siegel filmed these segments over four days in September, objecting the entire time because he felt that they compromised the power of the original ending. "Allied Artists," he wrote many years later, "was bursting at the seams with pods." Many agree with him, and the picture is sometimes shown in a "director's cut" with the framing devices removed. On the other hand, many of the preceding sci-fi-horror films of the period also end with epilogues informing us that the crisis will continue. An apparently happy ending would cut to, say, an egg hatching or some object hurtling through space on its way to Earth. Then, predictably, a giant question mark would be added to the end title, or "The End" would be replaced with "The Beginning." It had become a well-worn cliché, and this writer ventures the pod-ish minority opinion that the framing story benefits the film.

Upon its release, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* attracted little attention. The trade papers, which try to review everything, were enthusiastic, but most mainstream critics pointedly ignored it. Attempts to get the film a Broadway opening failed, and it opened instead in Brooklyn. Wanger made a personal plea to Bosley Crowther, film pundit of the *New York Times*, to view the film but the critic couldn't be bothered.

Somehow, the picture logged a whopping domestic gross of \$1,200,000. As the years passed, it gradually became recognized as the distinctive movie that it is, even to the extent of being remade twice: *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1978), directed by Philip Kaufman and photographed by Michael Chapman, ASC, transposes the small-town paranoia into the liberal environs of San Francisco while *Body Snatchers* (1992), directed by Abel Ferrara with cinematography by Bojan Bazelli, transplanted the alien-fueled apprehension to a southern military base.

As a home video feature, the original film has enjoyed a long life in black-and-white and colorized versions, and has even been restored for theatrical showings. Many writers and educators have read all sorts of significances into the picture, variously say-

ing it is anti-Communist, pro-Communist, anti-McCarthyist, anti-establishment, and so on and so forth. Wanger, Siegel and Mainwaring all denied such theories, saying that they were only trying to create some popular entertainment. Finney likewise stated that he had no such agendas.

After adding *Body Snatchers* to his resumé, Don Siegel's career skyrocketed, and he went on to direct a slew of top-drawer action pictures, including *The Killers*, *Madigan*, *The Beguiled* and *Dirty Harry*.

The ingenuity and imagination that Ellsworth Fredericks brought to *Body Snatchers* marked a turning point in his career. Before his retirement in 1969, he lent his eye to a number of major productions, including *Friendly Persuasion*, *Trooper Hook*, *The Light in the Forest*, and *Sayonara* (for which he received an Academy nomination).

After producing the inconsequential *Navy Wife* for AA, Wanger returned to independent production in 1958 with the highly successful *I Want to Live!*. Unfortunately, he next assumed the reins of 20th Century Fox's disastrous *Cleopatra*, a debacle from which his career never recovered. He was enthusiastically planning new projects at the time of his death in November of 1968. ♦

An Allied Artists picture; produced by Walter Wanger Productions, Inc.; in Superscope; directed by Don Siegel; screenplay by Daniel Mainwaring; based on the Collier's Magazine serial, The Body Snatchers, by Jack Finney; music composed and conducted by Carmen Dragon; director of photography, Ellsworth Fredericks, ASC; production designer, Ted Haworth; production manager, Allen K. Wood; assistant



Miles tries desperately to warn freeway motorists that "They're after you!" McCarthy performed his own stunts for the scene, narrowly dodging the oncoming cars.

directors, Richard Maybery, William Beaudine Jr.; film editor, Robert S. Eisen; sound technician, Ralph Butler; sound editor, Del Harris; music editor, Jerry Irvin; special effects, Milt Rice; set decorations, Joseph Kish; make-up artist, Emile LaVigne, SMA; hairdresser, Mary Westmoreland; script supervisor, Irva Ross; editorial supervision, Richard Heermance; contributions to screenplay, Richard Collins, Sam Peckinpah; Western Electric recording. Running time, 80 minutes. Released May 1, 1956.

Dr. Miles Bennell, Kevin McCarthy; Becky Driscoll, Dana Wynter; Dr. Dan Kaufman, Larry Gates; Theodora Belicec, Carolyn Jones; Jack Belicec, King Donovan; Sally, Jean Willes; Nick Grivett, Ralph Dumke; Wilma Lentz, Virginia Christine; Ira Lentz, Tom Fadden; Grandma Grimaldi, Beatrice Maude; Jerry Grimaldi, Bobby Clark; Charlie Buckholtz, Sam Peckinpah; Dr. Harvey Bassett, Richard Deacon; Dr. Hill, Whit Bissell; Gas Station Attendant, Dabbs Greer; Sam (Policeman), Guy Way; and Eileen Stevens, Jean Andrew, Everett Glass, Pat O'Malley, Guy Rennie, Marie Selland, Harry J. Vejar.

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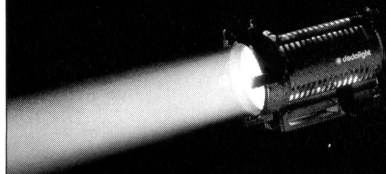
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On the Spot

Director/cinematographer Dante Ranieri Cecchin was in search of a truly novel look for the first digital TV production to be shot on Rome's famed Cinecitta soundstages. He wound up devising a concept that coupled ultra-violet paints with the illumination of actual actors; the end result produced a traditionally shot home interior which appeared as if it had been fashioned with 3-D computer-graphics animation.

To create what Cecchin refers to as "post-computer-graphics realism" for this spot — an advertisement for the Italian ironing product "Stop! Calcare" — Cecchin first coated all of the sets with Wildfire UV paints. He explains, "The basic colors were mixed with Optical UV white in different proportions to give a Fifties/Sixties effect."

The set's furniture was also lathered with Wildfire fluorescent paints and then lit with 14 Wildfire "long-throw" UV effects fixtures; this technique provided the digital camera with an f-stop of 2.8/4 throughout the entire set. Recalls Cecchin, "I wanted to work with a high color saturation on the walls and furniture of the room." He balanced this out by placing Gam Spun on all of the Fresnels and the backlight, a 1200W Molepar.

Italian actress Camilla Frontini, who plays the spot's hysterical housewife, was illuminated with traditional Mole Richardson tungsten Fresnels, gelled with a mix of Gamcolor's 1/4 CTB, Bastard Amber and 1/4 Antique Rose; this combination created a highly accented contrast between Frontini and the background. The Molepar was outfitted with a long Blackwrap snoot to assure that the tungsten light would shine solely on the actress.

"I used a Gamcolor Dark Rose in front of the tube in order to get a bigger rose saturation with a source that was four stops higher than the

tungstens," reports Cecchin. "Because tungstens wash out the saturation of the UVs, all of the traditional fixtures were flagged to maintain light only on the actress, and moved for each setup."

Italian Ad Achieves Luminous Look

by Mary Hardesty

Cecchin shot the commercial on Sony's Digital Betacam DVW 700 with the new 5.2 x 9 IF Canon lens and a Petroff matte-box. He notes that the UV effect is much simpler to control with a digital Sony camera than a motion picture film camera. "The Sony gives an incredible photographic result, and I have direct color control of the scene because the image on the monitor is really what's shot," Cecchin submits. "The ability to adjust contrast and black saturation directly within the camera gave me complete control on the shoot."

For optimum color balance, Cecchin mounted a Tiffen Warm 1/4 Pro Mist in the matte-box and set the camera at 4300° Kelvin. "I find that the Warm Pro Mist gives a better and more neutral color rendering to the Wildfire colors," he says.

Prior to the shoot, Cecchin conducted a color test on a 1:25 scale model of the set to determine the best color saturation when working with an electronic camera. "I was also able to check out the degradation of color saturation and resolution between the colors that would occur when the television signal was transmitted," he states.

Due to the unique nature of this shoot, and the use of the Wildfire technology, many cinematographers from the Association of Italian Cinematographers, including AIC president Giuseppe Pinori, visited the set to exchange their views on both the digital

technology and UV's creative possibilities. Cecchin opines, "Federico Fellini shot a lot of his films here at Cinecittà, and I think that if he'd had the opportunity to work with the Wildfire products, he would have found an incredible way to use them."

Cecchin's numerous years of experience have made him one of Europe's foremost experts on UV lighting; his latest CD-ROM project, *Blindness*, which incorporated Wildfire UV paints and lights throughout much of the story, won the 1996 international Emma Award for Best Interactive Movie.

When asked what he would do differently on his next UV shoot, Cecchin replies, "I would prefer to light the actress with Kino Flos, which have a more modern look. I would choose some Kinos with grids mounted [on them]. A tiny, battery-operated Kino could be mounted directly on the camera to clean up the skin and dress of the actress. I also found that the HMI Par we used for the back-light bounces too much light onto the walls, washing out the UV fluorescent effect. Instead, I would probably use a big Wall-O-Lite with large and deep flags of Blackwrap."

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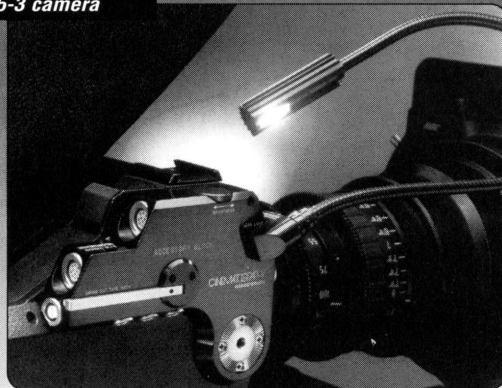
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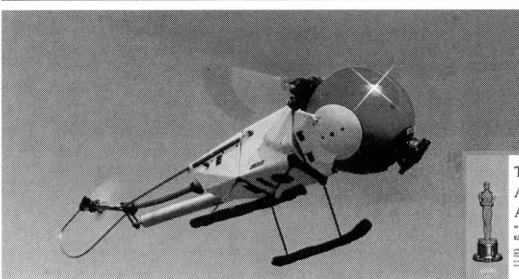
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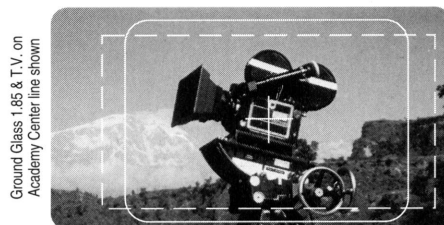
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New Products

compiled by Andrew O. Thompson

Kodak Teleproduction Film

Eastman Kodak's Primetime 640T Teleproduction film is now available in both 35mm (5620) and 16mm (7620) formats. The film is designed to work with today's advanced telecine transfer technology and features significant improvements in sharpness and grain structure. (The Primetime 640T will eventually replace Kodak EXR Primetime 640T film.) The new film combines the telecine-friendly advantage of the original Primetime film with the improved imaging characteristics found in the new generation of Kodak Vision films. Kodak developed the original Primetime film in response to changes in television postproduction; most TV programs are now edited digitally, with film prints rarely needed for projecting dailies or other purposes. The teleproduction film is optimized for the way telecines see light and color. It provides producers and cinematographers with a new tool for increasing creative options both on-set and in the production suite. With a recommended exposure index of 640 in 3200°K tungsten light, the new teleproduction film is designed to give cinematographers the freedom to do faster setups while capturing increased depth-of-field in low-key lighting.

For additional information, contact your local Eastman Kodak representative.

Dual-wattage Fresnel

Arriflex announces its dual wattage 10/12K tungsten Fresnel, which uses a standard DTY 10,000-watt lamp. The new 16 3/4" Fresnel lenses increase the light output over fixtures with 14" lenses without significantly increasing size or weight. The rugged aluminum extrusion construction makes the new unit suitable for either studio or location applications. Arri is also previewing a prototype of the new 12,000-watt lamp that will be soon available for this fix-

ture. Using this new lamp, the Fresnel will produce over 640 footcandles in flood or 3800 footcandles in spot at 25 feet.

Arriflex, (818) 841-7070, Fax (818) 848-4028.



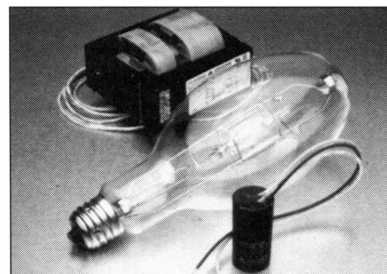
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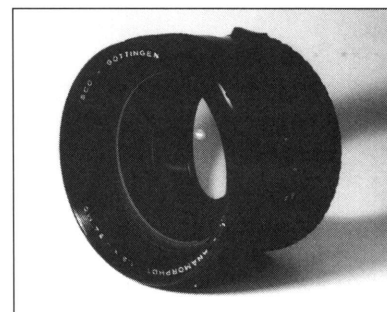
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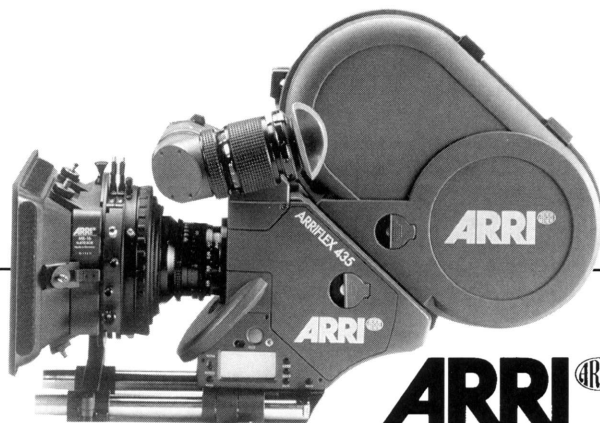
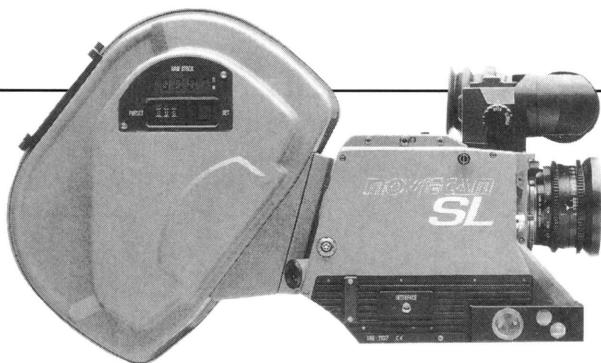
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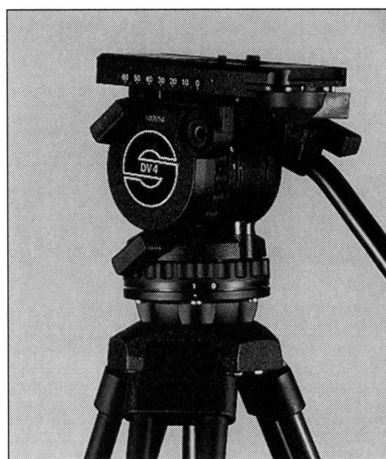
935-2580, Fax 0171-486-1272.

Handheld Zoom Lens

Fujinon introduces a new A15X8 EVM/ERD handheld ENG zoom lens that combines a lightweight (1.38kg) compact design (202mm), the company's proprietary Aspheric Technology, and a new inner focusing system. In addition to AT, which provides a reduction in spherical aberration and better overall performance than lenses employing only spherical lens elements, video graphers benefit from reduced MOD over the previous 15x8 lens. It also offers outstanding telephoto features to go along with its 15X zoom ratio, and has excellent ramping characteristics, a variable zoom grip and selectable zoom speed.

The lens has a focal length of 8-120mm without extender, and 16-240mm with its 2X extender. The lens' MOD is 0.75 meters and its F-number is 1.7 from 8-100mm, and 2.1 at 120mm.

Fujinon (201) 633-5600, Fax (201) 533-5216.

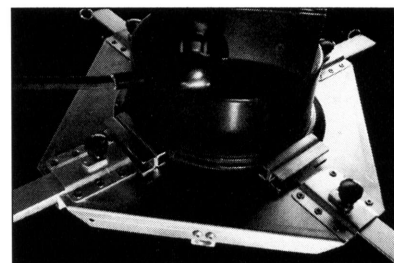


Digital Camera Fluid Head

Sachtler offers two new tripod kits — System DV2 and System DV4 — consisting of a fluid head, aluminum tripod and ground spreader. Both fluid head kits feature the patented leak-proof, two-step (0=1) Sachtler fluid system which works independently of temperature, whether one is shooting in a hot or cold environment. They also come with a single pan arm and the Sachtler Touch and Go quick camera locking system. The DV4 is additionally equipped with a sliding balance plate in order to center the camera accurately. With their respective carrying capacities — 2kg for the DV2 and 5.5kg for DV4 — the new systems

perfectly balance such digital cameras as the Sony DCR-VX 1000 (DV2) and DCR-VX 9000E (DV4).

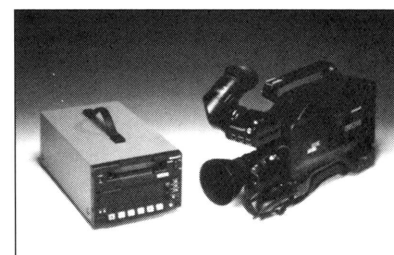
Sachtler, (89) 32-15-82-41, Fax (89) 32-15-82-27.



Adjustable Kit Ring

H. K. Technica announces the adjustable Kit Ring 1000 and Mini Teck-Tent. Following the same basic design as the larger Universal Lite-Ring, the Kit-Ring 100 is adjustable to fit over 25 instruments — 1K lights and smaller. This ring will attach to light with or without barn door ears (such as Omni/DP). The unit is designed to work with the 18" x 22" Teck-Tent softbox, but has the added advantage of retrofitting to the Video Pro and Daylight Junior lightbanks. The aluminum Kit-Ring and Teck-Tent are lightweight and easily packed into portable light kits.

H.K. Technica, Inc. (972) 279-7200.



New Panasonic Products

Panasonic introduces the new DVCPRO 200 series of component digital video products which includes a compact desktop VTR and a 1/3-inch 3-CCD camcorder, both of which are multimedia friendly, offering the incorporation of the IEEE 1394 digital video input/output interface as an option. The full size AJ-D200 full-size DVCPRO camcorder accepts a lightweight 1/3" lens that is both removable and interchangeable. The camera weighs only 11 pounds and consumes just 15 watts of power. When utilizing the large DVCPRO cassette, the camcorder offers 123 minutes of continuous recording.

The AJ-D200 features a high-sensitivity interline transfer (IT) CCD that delivers a resolution resembling the performance of camcorders with 410,000 pixels. A large light-collecting area gives the camera a high signal-to-noise ratio of 60 dB. The camera offers a horizontal resolution of 500 lines, SMPTE time code generator/reader, minimum illumination of five lux, and high sensitivity of 2,000 lux at f5.6.

The AJ-D230 accepts both large and medium DVCPR0 cassettes, and plays back mini-DV cassettes with a cassette adapter. The unit's analog interface comes equipped with composite video input/output and two-channel audio input/output for easy connection with existing analog equipment. S-Video input/output provides superior dubbing quality with S-VHS and component analog VCRs. Despite its space-saving size, the VTR boasts the same high-quality mechanism and video heads found in DVCPR0 broadcast equipment.

Panasonic also announces a Version 3.0 Upgrade Kit (the WJ-SU1000A) for its Postbox Nonlinear A/V Workstation. Version 3.0 incorporates more than 70 functional improvements to Panasonic's dynamic nonlinear editing system. With its Windows operating system, Postbox is a complete, fully integrated nonlinear postproduction facility packed into a single plug-and-play box. As a standard feature, the system offers M-JPEG image quality, a complete character generator with roll/crawl, a paint system, more than 300 real-time transition effects, and luminance and chroma keying. With optional 3-D transitions, an additional 80 effects are available. Among the new notable features in the Version 3.0 release are: multiple layering of the video stream; expanded editing functions; audio learn rubberband for level modification; additional 3-D key learn parameters; multimedia capabilities; expanded graphics functions; preview and VTR buttons in "record" to "video;" and enhanced audio waveform.

Time-lapse VCR

JVC now offers the SR-9070 time-lapse VCR, which is capable of recording between 12 and 960 hours of footage on a single T-120 cassette. Up to eight alarms can be set for recording daily, weekly or on weekdays, making it

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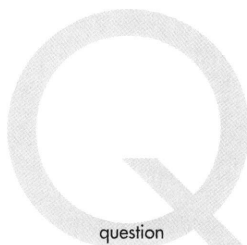
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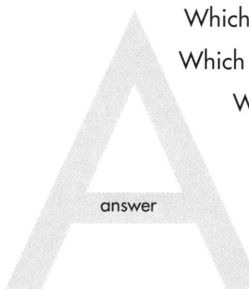
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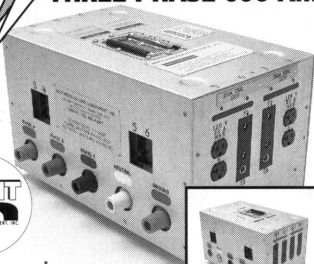
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easier to match surveillance schedules with business schedules for weekdays and weekend. Plus, the easy-to-use on-screen menu facilitates programming. For higher quality continuous real-time recording, VHS SP and EP modes are also available for two and six hours respectively. The programmable alarm recording feature allows the user to determine how much recording takes place when the alarm mode is entered. When the VCR enters the alarm recording mode, a cue signal is recorded onto the control track, not the audio track. The Alarm Search function locates these marks in the Shuttle Search mode and automatically starts playback of alarm recording. The unit's time/date generator superimposes the date, minute and second on the image during recording, allowing users to capture and display the alarm time and the number of alarm power failures that might have occurred.

For a closer review of recordings, the SR-9070 also offers still playback and field advance together with reverse and double-speed play. It is equipped with a camera select output signal to synchronize camera switching with time-lapse recording intervals. Since switching is performed during pauses in recording, continuous coverage is assured during time-lapse recording even when using multiple cameras.

The SR-9070 also allows for a variety of sophisticated time-lapse surveillance system configurations. Featuring an optional RS-232C interface (SA-K97U) for direct computer connection, it permits easy integration into a centralized computer-controlled system. By connecting several VCRs in a series, it is possible to automatically switch recording from one unit to the next.

JVC, (201) 794-3900, Fax (201) 523-2077.

Boom Poles

From K-Tek comes a line of strong, lightweight boom poles available in five sizes. The shortest telescopes from 1' 4" to 4' 11", and the longest from 4' 7" to nearly 21 feet. These poles are engineered from eight layers of precision-ground graphite and then burnished to produce a low handling-noise finish. They also feature tops with slots for threading cable internally or anchoring the end of the mic cable. Telescoping sections are connected with jam-resis-

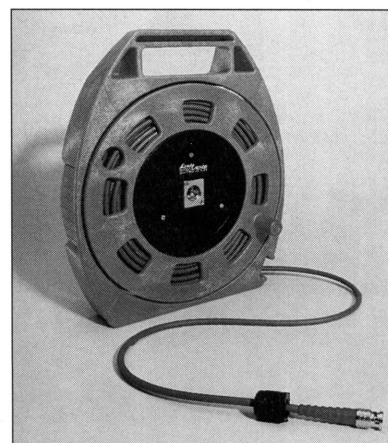
tant "captive collets" that require minimum torque and repel dust, dirt and sand. The collets are specially milled for lighter weight and a solid grip, and are then finished with an ultra-hard coating. The bottom coupling allows boom operators to attach a variety of accessories. An attachable base section with an internal 48V Phantom power supply lets the sound person utilize a radio mic transmitter at the boom. Also available is a "flow-through" accessory that allows an internal cable to exit without chafing. K-Tek's proprietary Mushroom Pole Bag is molded from rugged polyurethane for optimum shock protection and long life.

K-Tek (818) 766-0835, Fax (818) 766-2859.

BNC Cable Roll-Up

The BNC Roll-Up spool is a solution to tangled and knotted coaxial cables on video shoots. Rapid deployment allows instant access to the highest-quality Canare video cable. Retraction of the cabling is also a snap — simply wind the cable into the Roll-Up by turning the unit's crank. Spools are available in 63-, 100-, 150- and 200-foot sizes.

While in storage, the BNC Roll-Up guards the integrity of the cable by keeping its natural curl, thus preventing the "memory effect" of a poorly wound cable. The unit uses only the finest ultra-premium video cable, which retains its softness and flexibility even at sub-zero temperatures. Canare's state-of-the-art connectors are crimped to factory specifications, ensuring a tight, secure and true 75-ohm termination. The spool end of the Roll-Up is also damage-resistant due to its recessed design. The cable side is supplied from excessive



wear at the connector end. If required, premium cable may be purchased separately for other cabling requirements.

LentEquip Film and Video, 181 Carlaw Avenue, Suite 250, Toronto, Ontario M4M 2S1; Tel. (416) 406-2442, Fax (416) 461-1082.

Universal Mic Headset

Sennheiser introduces the NB2 adjustable headset with form-fitting boom assembly. Easily detachable for left- or right-side placement, the pliable boom accepts any Sennheiser lavalier microphone, including the MKE2, MKE102 and MKE104. Cable routing of the microphone along the boom is simplified by the assembly's flexible, rubberized construction.

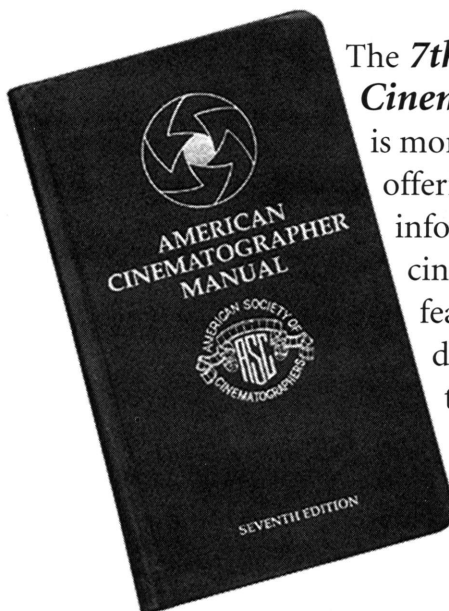
Sennheiser (860) 434-9190, (860) 434-1759.

Handtruck/Flatbed Cart

The Kart-A-Bag Kartmaster HD 500S is a handtruck that also converts into a flatbed cart. Weighing in at 18 kilos, the streamlined, extruded aluminum and stainless steel unit can carry over 227 kilos of equipment in its upright mode supported by pneumatic tires, or when converted to a four-wheel flatbed mode. In the latter position, the U.S.-manufactured HD 500S can be used with its folding aluminum and steel storage shelves. The bottom shelf slides over the base and locks in place while the top shelf acts as a workstation that can support 90 kilos. A push-button system holds the handles in fully extended and closed positions, and the handtruck will fold down to approximately 78 x 50 x 25cms. The HD 500 is also offered with optional 21cm solid polyurethane tires.

Kart-A-Bag's Super 600 commercial trolley weighs in at under six kilos unloaded, and will carry up to 136 kilos of equipment including flight cases. This unit features a patented, push-button opening and closing mechanism, and offers a self-locking, aluminum, telescopic construction that extends to 121cms and collapses down to just 50cms when not in use. Another benefit is a 'step slide' which gives users improved mobility and ease of access, up and down stairs. Attached elastic restraining cords offer a moveable 'stop lock' feature that allows cords to be attached at various points on the cart to prevent the load from slipping. Semi-

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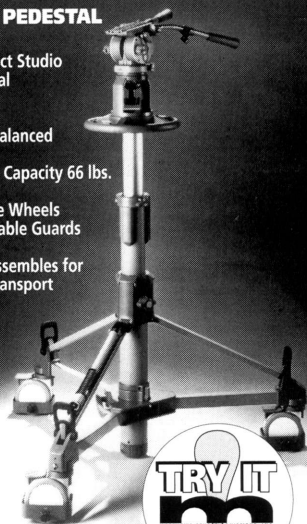
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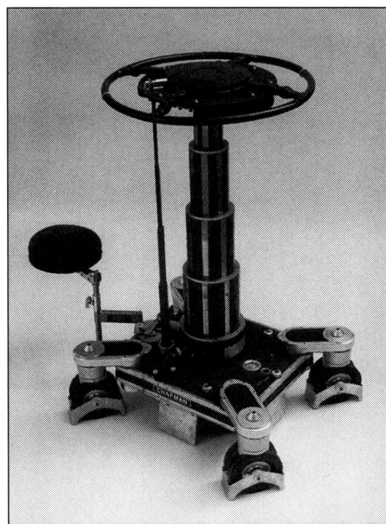
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pneumatic 15cm wheels and matching mudguards are further features of a product that comes with a limited 10-year warranty.

Another commercial trolley, the Tri-Kart 800, also features the company's patented telescopic construction. Weighing in at less than eight kilos, this unit will carry up to 136 kilos of equipment, and with its patented three step opening and closing mechanism can move on either two or four wheels. In the four-wheel mode with the load riding on the wheels, the user can push or pull the trolley with minimum effort. This trolley is constructed from aluminum tubing and chrome-plated, automotive tensile-strength steel, and has 15cm semi-pneumatic, roller-bearing wheels. Other features include a permanently attached elastic restraining straps and a 12 x 31 x 40cm steel platform base.

Kart-A-Bag, (815) 723-1940,
Fax (815) 723-2495.



Platform/Dolly Pedestals

Chapman/Leonard introduces the Pedolly Pedestal, a versatile unit with the capabilities of both the traditional pedestal and a camera dolly. The Pedolly obtains a low camera mount height of 15 1/2" with a maximum standard mount height of 55". The unit shares the crab, conventional steering and variable chassis leg features of the Super PeeWee while maintaining the ability to work on both a straight and curved track. Its column and chassis are detachable, leaving the column (which has a 16 1/2" diameter) to operate separate from the chassis within small, tight areas. The detachable column reduces the carrying weight of

the chassis to 179 pounds, making it easily transportable.

Also offered is the LenCin, the company's new studio pedestal. This unit's triangular-shaped base has improved 4-stage column rigidity, features crab or conventional steering, virtually silent operation and a variety of tires to accommodate many types of ground and floor conditions. The LenCin can fit through a standard 36" door and can be used with 28" center-to center track. It has a minimum camera mount height of 16 1/2", a maximum mount height of 55 1/2", a 28" turning radius, and 39" of vertical travel. A large steering ring offers increased leverage and an optional cam lock allows the operator to lock the column at any height. The column detaches from the chassis for easier transportation and maintenance, and can be used independently from the chassis.

Chapman/Leonard Studio
Equipment, (818) 883-6559, Fax, (818)
502-7263.

New GAM Gear

The Great American Market now offers the new 2.5K Gam Scene Machine, which weighs only 42 pounds and can be used with all of the new DMX-controlled accessories, as well as with conventional accessories. This projector features a single-ended lamp that results in brighter color rendition and a higher light output. It puts out more light than existing 4K projectors, yet is more compact with half as much weight. The DMX-512 control allows you to run all the effects from the lighting control console — simply by turning the power supply on/off, varying the speed or direction of an effect, or controlling the dowsers for a smooth dim. Innovative high-resolution lenses, including the newest 3.5" focal length lens (with a more than 60-degree beam spread) are now available.

GAM also introduces its new Light Motif Catalog, which includes more than 850 available projectable designs. The company maintains over 150,000 patterns in stock at all times, ready to be shipped on the same day, or the next day at no charge. The catalog shows 150 patterns in five moving light sizes - V, E, G, D, And M.

Great American Market, (213)
461-0200. ♦

Letters — continued from page 10

doesn't know that more than 250 prints were made off original negatives prior to about 1968 because the duplicating stocks of the time would not yield prints of sufficiently acceptable quality. It is also not that easy to open a well-made splice; there is actually a greater risk of ripping and damaging the negative in this way than losing a frame to make a better splice.

Just prior to reading Mr. Markey's letter, I had seen a 70mm prints of Messrs. Harris and Katz's restoration of *My Fair Lady* at a theater with a 50-foot-wide screen. I believe that even an expert would need a side-by-side comparison to tell that this print was from an internegative and not the original. That kind of quality would not be possible by the methods that Markey advocates.

— Rick Mitchell
Los Angeles, CA

Additional Errata

Several errors appeared in AC's recent article on *Portrait of a Lady* (Jan. 1997). In the photo of cinematographer Stuart Dryburgh on page 51, the cinematographer is not holding a Nikon still camera, but rather a viewfinder with a 40mm Primo lens attached. On page 52 of the same article, Dryburgh's quote about anamorphic and spherical lenses attributes the qualities of the latter lenses to the former. Finally, it should be noted that Dryburgh's work on Jane Campion's *The Piano* did not win an Academy Award, as was stated, but instead earned an Oscar nomination.

An additional error also appeared in our article on Kenneth Branagh's *Hamlet* in the same issue (p. 60, top of third column), in which Alex Thompson is quoted as saying that "the focal length of a 75mm lens on a 65mm camera is approximately the same as that of a 150mm spherical lens on a 35mm camera." As any student of cinematography knows, exactly the reverse is true: a 150mm lens on a 65mm camera is equivalent to a 75mm lens in the 35mm format. ♦

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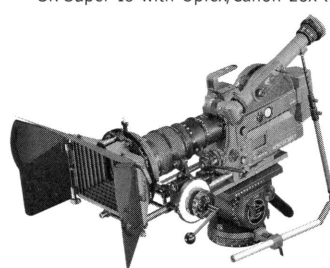


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Points East

The Cairo International Film Festival celebrated its 20th anniversary in December with films from around the world, including a special screening of *Midaq Alley*, from Mexico's Alameda Films. Director Arturo Ripstein adapted the project from Pulitzer Prize-winning Egyptian author Naguib Mahfouz's book of the same name; the screening was held on December 10, the birthday of both Mahfouz and Alameda Films' President Alfredo Ripstein.

While films from Asia, Europe, Africa, and Latin and North America made a strong showing, the Festival — helmed by Egyptian film critic and writer Saad Eldin Wahba — provided a unique opportunity for American visitors to view Arab films, which get little or no distribution in U.S. theaters. "If more distributors got the chance to see Egyptian films," says veteran Egyptian director Tewfiq Saleh, "I believe they would buy them, and give them the exposure they deserve. But to my knowledge, the problem is that most Egyptian films in America are available only on video, and are seen only by Egyptians and Arabs who live there."

Saleh is one of the few Egyptian directors whose works have been shown in America. Two of Saleh's films, *The Duped* and *Fool's Alley*, were shown last April at New York's Centennial of Arab Cinema, held at The Film Society of Lincoln Center. A total of 35 features from Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco and Kuwait were shown at the event, which became, to date, the largest and most comprehensive presentation of Arab films in the United States. Says Saleh, "We need many more of these festivals — not just once every few years, but continuously, in order to create a market for Arab cinema in America. It would take years."

While the cultural and social identities that distinguish Arab and American cinema are drastically different, Saleh believes that there is a mar-

ket for Arab films can be found in the States. "The main difference between Egyptian and American films are the cultural traditions that all films depend on," says the director. "In American cinema, the Western is based upon the history and tradition of the American culture,

Cairo International Film Festival Spotlights Arab Cinema

by Brooke Comer

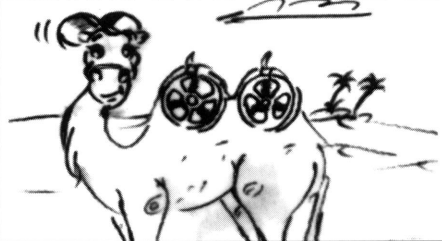
and on characteristics inspired by that culture. In Egypt, we depend on folklore, cultural traditions, and morals which are completely different, and which give a different shape to the stories and styles of our films.

"But," he adds, "new stories and new styles come from new influences." Egyptian cinema has been influenced by Hollywood over the years, so it stands to reason that the two cultural traditions could stimulate each other.

Saleh's 1972 film *The Duped* was one of the first Arab films to deal with the issue of Palestine. Set in 1958, the film follows three Palestinians from different generations who conceal themselves in a truck to travel from Iraq to Kuwait in search of a better life. "It's one of my favorite films," says Saleh, "because it tackles a worthwhile subject, exposing a complex problem in a simple manner." Spare sets and black-and-white film lend to the simplicity, allowing the story and characters — who encounter fatal obstructions at the Kuwait border — to provide the film's weight.

The director is quick to add that he is not only interested in heavy dramatic themes. "In spite of the fact that most of my films are serious, and often tragedies, I'd like to make a musical," says Saleh. He adds that Egyptian musicals are very different from their American counterparts. "We have no

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Fred Astaire, no Gene Kelly. We have singing, but we don't have dancing. We have belly dancers, but that's a completely different matter."

Music has been intrinsic to Egyptian cinema since its inception, which began in full force around 1927 when sound was introduced. "Egypt made very few silent movies," says Saleh, "but with sound, film became an extension of the record album, which was the most important piece of artistic merchandise in the Middle East during that period. Films depended on six, seven

"If more distributors got the chance to see Egyptian films, I believe they would buy them and give them the exposure they deserve."

— director Tewfiq Saleh

or eight songs, which added a thin thread of story to the picture." Music was essential to the growing popularity of Egyptian cinema, not only in Egypt, but in the rest of the Arab world.

Egyptian cinema still depends on the sale of films to the Arab world; the problem, according to Saleh, is that Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States are the main film purchasers today. "The buyer determines the trends, styles, morals and artistic values in cinema," he explains. About 10 or 15 years ago, Lebanese distributors were the main buyers of Egyptian film, and the values in Lebanon, a relatively modern country with cultural ties to Europe, were a far cry from the stricter mores of the very conservative Saudis.

While filmmakers who respond to the demands of this market rarely expand the perimeters of Egyptian cinema, Saleh sees signs of change in a new generation of young directors who refuse to be confined to the restrictions of Saudi values. Although these new filmmakers don't have as much money — Saleh notes that the typical budget for a small Egyptian film is about \$450,000, 60% of which comes from foreign sales — they still have a chance at success in the marketplace. "Their movies might not make as much money right away," he says, "but if they are good, they will in the future." ♦

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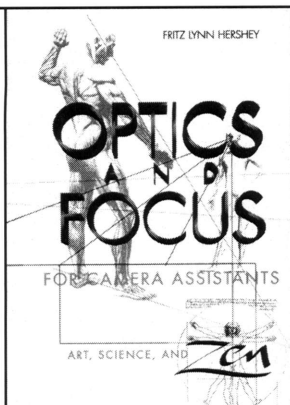
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Fritz L. Hershey. 1996. 294 pages. Soft cover. \$39.⁹⁵. UPS shipping & handling \$5. Calif. residents add 8.25% tax. Write for our Book Catalogue.

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Books in Review

by George Turner

Magic Hour

by Jack Cardiff
Faber and Faber, cloth,
267 pps., \$26.95

It's good news for all lovers of cinematography when a real genius of the art writes about his experiences. Jack Cardiff, BSC, who is also a fine director and a skilled painter, has done us all a favor by sharing a lifetime of memories in his autobiography, *Magic Hour*. With refreshing candor and a gift for making his words conjure up images, he not only recounts his own history but that of the British film industry and many of its creators.

Cardiff began his movie career in 1928 as an all-purpose flunky on the British silent version of *The Informer*. In the Thirties, he was a member of Ned Mann's special effects team on such grand-scale Alexander Korda productions as *The Man Who Could Work Miracles* and *Things to Come*. He really came into his own when he was selected to work for the Technicolor Company, which had just established its British branch. The executives there liked the fact that Cardiff used the principles of painting as the basis for his cinematography. Those principles would help Cardiff to become one of the great color cinematographers; examples of his finest work include the Powell/Pressburger productions *Black Narcissus* (1946) and *The Red Shoes* (1948).

Co-workers who are sketched out in the course of Cardiff's book include Michael Powell, Alfred Hitchcock, Sophia Loren, Laurence Olivier, Marilyn Monroe, Marlene Dietrich, Peter Lorre, Henry Hathaway, Michael Redgrave and many others. Cardiff also mentions some of his great colleagues, including ASC members Fredrick A. Young, Charles Rosher, Osmond H. Borradaile, Ray Rennahan, Lee Garmes, and Harold Rosson, and BSC cameramen Christopher Challis, Geoffrey Unsworth and Georges Perinal. Whether funny, tragic, frustrating or infuriating, the anecdotes

are always fresh and interesting.

Especially fascinating are remembrances of sweating it out in the Sudan with the Kordas on *The Four Feathers*; trying to make the doomed *William Tell* with producer-star Errol Flynn; surviving the towering rages of Henry Hathaway on *The Black Rose*; wrestling with Hitchcock's temporary infatuation with long takes on *Under Capricorn*; learning first hand the virtues and faults of Marilyn Monroe; and regretfully avoiding a love affair with Sophia Loren.

At one point Cardiff tells about a misadventure involving "the American Society of Cameramen" [sic]. Incidentally, Cardiff was honored by the ASC with the organization's International Award in 1993.

The Memoirs of Alice Guy Blache

translated by Roberta
and Simone Blache
edited by Anthony Slide
Scarecrow, 208 pps.,
paper, \$32

This small, pricey, but important volume is a firsthand account of how a Victorian woman became one of the earliest and most influential pioneers of the motion picture industry. Born in 1873 in a Parisian suburb, Alice Guy was working as a secretary when she became the Gaumont Company's first director — and the industry's first woman director — in 1897. In fact, she directed all Gaumont productions until 1905, and by 1907 had made at least 403 films, many of which were sound films synchronized with wax disc recordings.

She and her husband, Herbert Blache, later came to the United States. In 1910, she founded the Solax Company in Fort Lee, NJ, while Blache worked for Gaumont's American studio. She produced and/or directed 331 Solax pictures and 23 feature-length pictures for Blache and other companies (including Metro and Pathé), the last in 1920.

A tale of triumph and tragedy about a brilliant pioneer, *The Memoirs of Alice Guy Blanche* details an era of film history that very much needed telling.

I Was That Masked Man

by Clayton Moore
with Frank Thompson
Taylor Publishing Co.,
cloth, 266 pps., \$22.95

Actor Clayton Moore alternately played heroes and heavies in 10 serials, 45 feature films and various TV shows between 1937 and 1961, but he is most popularly known as the Western hero The Lone Ranger. Moore embodied the role in 221 half-hour television episodes and two theatrical features made during 1949-51 and 1954-58. He has since made many personal appearances wearing the costume of "the masked rider of the Plains," although for several years he was forbidden by the producers to don the mask in public. So strongly identified is he with a character that he last portrayed on screen 39 years ago that a Hollywood Walk of Fame star, placed across from the Chinese Theatre in 1987, reads, "Clayton Moore — The Lone Ranger."

Moore has yet another cult following that goes back to his serial performances, which began in 1942 in Republic's *The Perils of Nyoka* and ended in 1953 with the last serial ever made, Columbia's *Gunfighters of the Northwest*. He writes engagingly of both the fun and the hardships of serial production and of the camaraderie among the people who made them.

As a former trapeze artist and athlete, Moore was ideal for the strenuous life of a serial and Western star. He loved it, and that affection is evident in his words: "Westerns are true Americana. They tell of the struggles of our ancestors who came West seeking new homes, new ways of living, freedom and the promise of a bright future. The story of the West is inspiring and terrible, idealistic and bloody, sublime and atrocious. The good parts of the story inspire us. The bad parts warn us of what we have to do to make things better."

This is one Hollywood story that, despite its inevitable episodes of heartache, exudes none of the bile that makes so many industry biographies difficult to relish. ♦

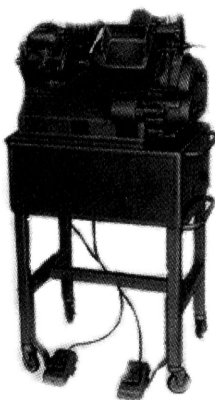
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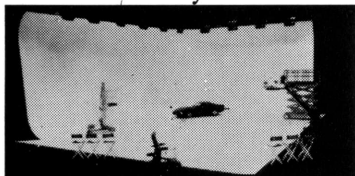
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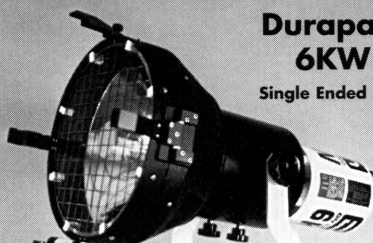


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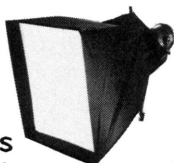
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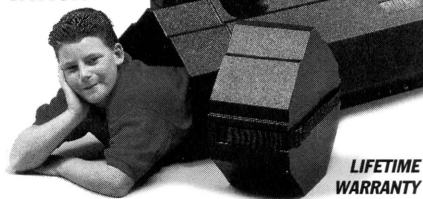
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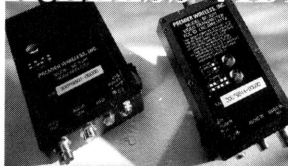
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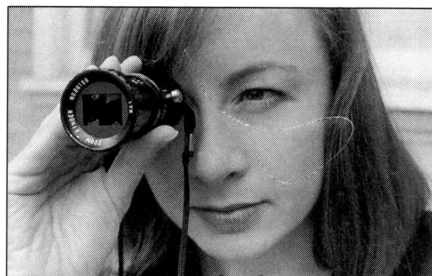
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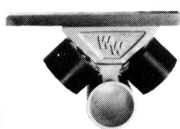


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From the Clubhouse



Ackerman Joins ASC

The ASC's newest member is Thomas Ackerman. He is a native of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, where his father, Ralph, worked as a projectionist at the Times Theater. As a teenager, Ackerman shot 8mm shorts which were later broadcast on local TV outlet WMT. After serving as a mail messenger at NBC Television in New York, he returned to his home state to earn a BA in Speech and Dramatic Art. While a student, he photographed educational films as a member of the University Motion Picture Unit. He also completed Air Force ROTC as a Distinguished Military Graduate, and was commissioned a second lieutenant upon receiving his degree in 1966.

Assigned to active duty as a Motion Picture Officer, Ackerman produced and directed training and public information films at an Air Force base in Orlando, Florida. In 1968, he was transferred to the 600th Photo Squadron in Saigon, and was later assigned as Commander of Detachment 2 on the 601st Photo Flight in Thailand where his duties included combat documentation.

Upon his discharge in 1970, Ackerman moved to Washington, D.C. to work as a production manager, cameraman and editor for Academy Award-winning documentary filmmaker Charles Guggenheim. Although his final project on staff was to photograph the campaign film of presidential candidate George McGovern, he and Guggenheim continued to collaborate on a number of projects, including a special 3-D presentation for the US Pavilion at the 1984 New Orleans World's Fair.

In 1973, Ackerman and Mike Robe co-founded the partnership Robe/Ackerman, and for the next five years produced corporate and government films and television commercials. During this time, he wrote and directed two films for the USIA "Century 3" series, each of which was honored with a CINE Golden Eagle award. Ackerman was inducted into the IATSE in 1978 and began shooting such network specials and

documentaries as *The Making of Star Wars* and *The National Disaster Safety Test*.

In the mid-Eighties, he made the transition from music video to feature film photography. Ackerman's cinematographic resumé to date includes *New Year's Evil*, *Foxfire Light*, *Roadhouse 66*, *Girls Just Want to Have Fun*, *Back to School*, *Beetlejuice*, *National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation*, *True Identity*, *Dennis the Menace*, *Baby's Day Out*, *Jumanji* and two upcoming films, *18th Angel* and *George of the Jungle*.

Kovacs, Zsigmond and Koltai to Teach at Hungarian Film School

Beginning on September 15, the Academy of Drama and Film in Budapest will offer a two-year MA degree/diploma course in film and television directing and cinematography. The Academy was founded in 1865 under the name of the Actor's Academy. In 1883, the school became known as the National Hungarian Royal Theater Academy. The faculty of film was established in 1948; since 1986, the institution has enjoyed the status of a university as the only higher educational state institute of its kind in Hungary.

The tutors for this special English-speaking course will be chosen from the full-time faculty of the Academy's teaching staff, among others. Instructors will also include famed cinematographers Vilmos Zsigmond, ASC; Laszlo Kovacs, ASC; Lajos Koltai, ASC; György Illés, HSC; Gabor Szabo, HSC; Jean Badal; Tamas Vamos; Istvan Szabo (an Oscar winner for *Mephisto*); and Janos Hersko (former dean of Stockholm's Dramatic Institute). Functioning as guest faculty members will be professors Yvette Biro (NYU), Dick Ross (NFTS, Beaconsfield), Gyula Gazdag (UCLA) and Gabor Kalman (USC).

Apart from the practical studio exercises and the shooting of exam films-videos, the curriculum features studies on visual storytelling, intensive

work with actors (English-speaking students of the drama faculty), analyses of world famous films with Istvan Szabo, theory and programming of multimedia projects, international law of media and author's rights, psychology, commercial advertising and film music. Each semester, students will shoot an examination film in video. If necessary, the final diploma project can be shot in the student's home country, or any other location in or out of Hungary as well.

Ideally, candidates should be in their twenties (the age limit is 30) with a BA (or equivalent) degree in the visual arts — film/TV directing, cinematography, script-writing, set design, or editing — since the program is structured for those who already hold a basic knowledge of filmmaking. In very special cases, applicants with three to five years of professional experience will also be considered for enrollment.

Those wishing to apply should ensure that the following material arrives no later than May 15: an application (which can be obtained from the Academy); a resumé; a passport-size photo; a narrative letter; a copy of a diploma; a sample copy of work (films, videotapes, scripts); a self-portrait on video — shot by the candidate — of no more than five minutes in length (no talking heads, please); a bank statement that details that one has enough existing funds to cover the cost of the program; and letter(s) of recommendation.

The class will have no more than 16 students. Those who have made the short list will be notified by May 1, and will be asked to arrive for a personal interview sometime in June. The Academy cannot provide accommodation for this two- to three-day period, but interviewees will be notified immediately of their results.

All inquiries should be sent by mail to: The Academy of Drama and Film - Budapest, Prof. György Karpáti - Head of the MA Course, Faculty of Film and Television, H-1088 Budapest, Szentkirályi u. 32/A, Hungary. ♦

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